This Week

January 18, 1947

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The Showman of VANITY FAIR

by LIONEL STEVENSON

The Life of WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

Illustrated with his own sketches, this first complete biography of William Makepeace Thackeray is bound to find a wide audience among students of Victorian literature, as well as general readers who enjoy the portrait of a brilliant personality. Interwoven with the abundant details of Thackeray's life, are sharp, vivid vignettes of Dickens, Carlyle, Charlotte Brontë and Robert Browning as well as the literary and political figures whom Thackeray met on his famous American lecture tour—Prescott, Holmes, Longfellow and many others. Taken together, Thackeray's associations embrace the entire Victorian scene—both in Europe and America, and Lionel Stevenson's perceptive treatment of them illuminates a fascinating era in literary history. $5.00

AT ALL BOOKSTORES

Charles Scribner's Sons

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TRADE Winds

POSSIBLY YOU HAVE heard by this time of the new Random House offices, in what was once the Fahnestock residence, just back of Saint Patrick's Cathedral, New York. The rooms are so big that Joseph Henry Jackson opined we had an edifice complex. Somebody else suggested we call the place The Palazzio Thickens. The southern wing of the structure is owned by the *Herald-Tribune* Reids, the middle wing by the Hubbards. In the center is a fine big courtyard, a wonderful place to park cars, particularly since it has become illegal to leave them on Madison Avenue.

Unfortunately, the Random House executives are not exactly early risers, and by the time they arrive upon the scene the courtyard is often filled with a variety of strange and unidentified vehicles. This particularly irked Mr. Harper, head accountant, who drives down from White Plains, and sees no reason why he shouldn't be able to park his car directly beneath his own window.

There came a morning a few weeks ago when Harper found his favorite space occupied by a very fancy, brand new Town-and-Country Chrysler—a Hollywood version of a station wagon. Harper impulsively wrapped a note around the steering wheel. It read, "While we all admire the appearance of your beautiful new car, we wonder if you would mind parking it elsewhere. After all, this courtyard is owned by the Reids, the Hubbards, and Random House, and we would like to get a little use out of it ourselves."

Three days later he received this answer: "I appreciate your ormolu description of my car. Also I am aware that the courtyard belongs to the Reids, the Hubbards, and Random House. Please do not mind, however, if I sometimes desire to use part of my third of it. Sincerely, Whitelaw Reid."

Harper is so crushed by the incident, he's bought a commutation ticket on the New York Central. . . .

CAROLYN VALENTINE reports that she met a famous writer on international affairs charging down Fifth Avenue with a bulky package under his arm. Asked to account for his haste, he explained, "I just finished the last chapter of my new textbook, and I want to get it to my publisher before something else happens." . . . All the way from Cape Town, South Africa, Dr. Morris Zion writes to tell about an epitaph he spotted in a local cemetery: "In memory of our father: Gone to join his appendix, his tonsils, his olfactory nerve, his kidney, his eardrum, and a leg prematurely removed by an interne who craved the experience." . . .

JAMES HILTON pays a rare tribute to his publisher, Alfred McIntyre of Little, Brown, in the current *Atlantic Monthly*.

> Despite the traditional cat-and-dog relationship of author and publisher [he writes] I have yet to find any businessmen whose ethics are, on the whole, higher than those of book publishers, though it may be that my own experience has been fortunate. After "Good-bye, Mr. Chips!" first came out as a long short story on both sides of the Atlantic, I did not foresee any future possibilities, and a cable from an American publisher offering royalty terms for book publication inspired me to what I then thought was a smart idea—that is, to sell outright for enough cash to provide me with a holiday in Switzerland. I still cherish that publisher's cabled reply to the effect that, in his opinion, any outright sale would be against my best interests, and that he would give me the modest sum asked for as an advance. And, of course, knowing him personally now, I know also that, even had I insisted, he would have changed matters to my advantage when the book turned out a best-seller.

Mr. Hilton laments the fact that "almost anyone in the news, however disreputable, has a name-value that some publisher would grab; a professor's authoritative study of American diplomacy during the nineteenth century will doubtless find acceptance, but there would be more spirited bidding for, say, Al Capone's 'Memoirs of Cook County'." . . . There actually lived a publisher a few years ago, whose name I cannot divulge, who conceived the notion of publishing Mr. Capone's life story under the title of "The Complete Works of Cicero." Unimaginative associates restrained him.

TEDDY WHITE'S experience with "Thunder Over China," which he coauthored with Annalee Jacoby, was a real-life version of the traditional melodrama's third-act climax, "The U. S. Marines have landed!" Disagreeing with his employer, Henry Luce, over the latter's China policy, White quit the job, although at the moment he had no other visible means of support. A few hours later he was informed that "Thunder Over China" had been chosen by the Book-of-the-Month Club! Annalee Jacoby, incidentally, under her maiden name of Whitmore, began her career as a secretary in the MGM studio, and rose to the rank of junior scenario writer before she resigned to seek adventure in the Far East. Producer Adrian Scott, who worked with her, says, "She was a darn sight prettier than most of the stars." . . . White and William Harlan Hale are now senior editors of the revitalized *New Republic*. . . .

LONG BEFORE Mike Romanoff became one of the country's best-known restaurateurs, he visited the home of Rockwell Kent in Ausable Forks. "I take it you are an experienced horseman," said Kent. Romanoff answered, "Of course." Kent didn't believe him, and deliberately led him to the toughest little bronco in the stable. Romanoff, who never refused a dare in his life, mounted the bronco, who promptly executed a set of maneuvers that would have brought a rodeo audience to its feet. Romanoff held on gamely, but on one of his bucks the bronco got his rear right foot tangled in the stirrup, and Romanoff went sailing over his head. "What's the matter?" called Kent innocently. "Not a thing," said Mike, tentatively feeling for broken bones. "Only if that horse is getting on, I'm getting off!" . . .

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT has conferred the Legion of Honor upon Ben Lucien Burman, for his stirring reporting from French Equatorial Africa during the war. The best of his dispatches were published in book form by Dutton's under the title of "Miracle on the Congo." . . . Simon & Schuster have sold their share of the People's Book Club to Sears, Roebuck, who will run it by themselves from this point forward, under the editorship of John Scott Mabon. . . . Ludwig Lewisohn is now on the Farrar, Straus list. His "Case of Mr. Crump," privately printed in Paris over twenty

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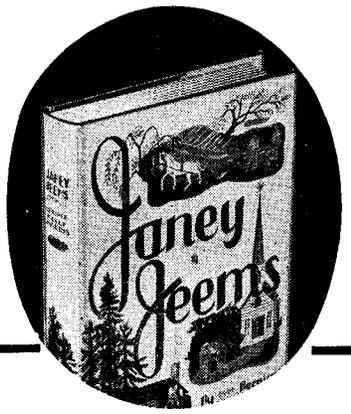
years ago, finally will appear in an American edition in March. . . . A big Chicago department store sent four copies of "The Snake Pit" to Mary Jane Ward, asking her to autograph them for special customers. She returned them, properly inscribed, the same day. Three weeks later the adjustment bureau wrote, "Dear Madam: We have received four books from you which are being held at this office. We regret that these books are not returnable due to the fact that they have been autographed. We await your further instructions." Miss Ward says they are in for quite a long wait.

BENNY DE VOTO, complete with five-gallon hat and two-gun holster, has returned to Cambridge to complete his "Across the Wide Missouri" for Houghton Mifflin. . . . Henry Holt's new World Reader Series will be an introduction, country by country, to the twentieth-century literature of the world at large. The first volume, devoted to Ireland, will be edited by Dennis Devlin. The next two will be on France and China. . . . Irving Hoffman reports that Hollywood is seeking General Eisenhower's campaign-christener to offer him an assignment tacking titles onto pictures. Among the unsung genius' credits are these code names for the various operations in the great campaigns: "Overlord" for the invasion of the Continent; "Bolero" for the supply operations; "Market" and "Garden" for the joint operations in Holland; "Lumberjack" for the 1st and 3rd Armies' advance on the Rhine; "Undertone" for the supporting operations in the South; "Varsity" for the air drop across the Rhine; "Plunder" for the final assault upon the Ruhr. . . .

ARTHUR KOBER'S four-year-old daughter, Cathy, attended a birthday party where the food had been seasoned too strongly for her liking. Quite naturally she remarked to the hostess, "This is awful!" "Oh, no," corrected her nurse. "It's very good. It's just a little different. You'll get to like it." "No," said Cathy, "I won't like it. It's just awful."

On the way home, the nurse explained, "When you're eating out, dear, it's all right to say the food is good if you like it, but if you don't, just leave it on your plate and don't say anthing."

The next Saturday, Cathy went visiting again. For lunch, she was served creamed chicken, which she loves, and peas, which she always has hated. She finished the chicken, tasted the peas, then looked at the nurse, and in her best Emily Post voice remarked, "These peas are delicious—but awful." BENNETT CERF.



A novel "on the exact balance" . . .

FIVE months after publication the fan mail is still coming in for **Janey Jeems,** by BERNICE KELLY HARRIS:

From a theatrical producer: "The strange little life of Janey Jeems is really as great a life as most people are allowed to live, in this backward world."

From a critic who took the trouble to write a letter as well as a review: "What a book—that **Janey Jeems!** I don't know when I've been so moved and haunted by a story. . . . So far as I know this is the first novel ever written about colored people that has the humanity never to mention color."

And, just before Christmas, from a bookseller: "Here is one of the few books to recommend without reservations."

Janey Jeems is the fifth novel by MRS. HARRIS, set in the North Carolina country she introduced us to in Purslane, but it is a far different kind of novel from Portulaca, Sage Quarter, or any of her others. It is a Negro story *without the color line*, and, to the best of our knowledge, the first novel of its kind ever written.

As people, not Negroes, Janey and Jeems are united. And what happens to these two as *people*, not Negroes, is what draws you through the rewarding pages of **Janey Jeems.**

Jeems' friends and neighbors spoke of him as a man who did things "on the exact balance," meaning that he always acted with dignity and strength, instinctively honorable, a man in tune with himself and the world. But the phrase also fits MRS. HARRIS' whole novel about Jeems and his Janey. Which is why readers write in about their pleasure in discovering this book amid a world which is very much *not* "on the exact balance."

JANEY JEEMS
by Bernice Kelly Harris
At you bookseller's, $2.50 • **DOUBLEDAY**

NOTE: Paul, at present on vacation, will return to where he sits in this column next week

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El Día Que Yo Nací

THERE'S a small shop about half a block down the street and there we found a recording we had been looking for, off and on, for several years. It wasn't as good a disc as the one we first heard and once owned, although it came without scratches. But it still carried the wailing, bending notes of a particular Spanish flamenco which, when you translate it into English, means "the day I was born".

We heard it first in the bleak and lovely early winter days of 1940. It was a kind of music which, strange at first, later seems to "belong" the way a hand belongs. Like the boy who sold week-old boutonnieres on a New York street corner, holding the petals together so that they wouldn't fall off before they got to the lady's coat, this music was strangely tender and tough. It had been brought from a country where the plowed-up fields were trenches and where the fiber of the song, lifted against a moon, was the only requiem some men had, "the day I was born".

Things left over from even a named and undefeated war are apt to seem melodramatic, and an undistinguished war like this, fought by patriots, is foredoomed. Almost all the men fought voluntarily, for principles of democracy; not because they were made to fight, but because the idea of a new, free country still haunted their imaginations and they believed they could make it come about. These men were the crusaders and the revolutionaries and the martyrs of the 1930's, and they have everything in common with those men and women whose quest for freedom has been a basic characteristic of the American people from the very beginning.

A group of such people of the nineteenth century, people whose first interest was to strengthen and expand the American concept of a free people, are the subject of a new book by Charles A. Madison, a man who sees clearly and believes strongly in those truths which have not always been as self-evident in practice as they are in theory. He calls his book CRITICS AND CRUSADERS: *A Century of American Protest*. There are six large sections, each dealing with a particular group, and they range from Abolitionists to Anarchists to Socialists. Such people as William Lloyd Garrison and Eugene Debs are the equations, and after hearing their stories in a kind of historical perspective which has never before been given them, they somehow fall in line with the martyrs and saviours of all time. Alone, they are isolated symbols of man's impulse toward a better and more honest life. Together, they form a group of adult individuals who differ in theory, but agree in principle. And the principle is a very simple one which we have all learned—what Abraham Lincoln once jotted down on a slip of paper and boys and girls in grammar school have memorized ever since—that all men are created equal.

With changing times, freedom means different things, and many of the things these men and women of the nineteenth century fought for have already been won. To Thoreau it meant the absence of coercion; to Randolph Bourne it meant passionate non-conformity; to Eugene V. Debs it meant economic reality. But each of the libertarians in this volume—and there are full studies of eighteen of them—fought for the ideal as he or she saw it, and in doing so, expanded the whole field of human rights. Their struggles were often long and difficult, but driven by strong social idealism, they dedicated their lives to the greater good of all people.

Charles Madison, who says, "The story of these frontiersmen of freedom cannot be told too frequently; actually it has not been told often enough," has taken long strides to correct that situation and he tells here, in swift, vivid words, the stories behind the men who are too often merely names in one's mind.

After the three Abolitionists—Garrison, John Brown, Wendell Phillips — there are three Utopians — Margaret Fuller, Albert Brisbane, and Edward Bellamy. Down the years the names go — Henry George, Altgeld, Steffens, Reed—grouped by their causes. Individual studies are set in frames supplied by background sketches of the movements each group led, and the whole is an "attempt to depict and re-evaluate our social progress of the past century." The final note suggests that all of these critics and crusaders who have helped the American dream on its way have a common quality of radicalism—a radical being "an idealist who feels compelled to right existing wrongs . . . driven by a messianic urge to remake the world."

Therefore we, who have known the radicals and martyrs of our own time—who have listened to the same music, who have heard the same jokes, who have smoked the same brand of cigarettes and still do—can hear more clearly and evaluate more carefully these voices from another century. They were part of a birthright which belongs to all of us and which caused men to die in the turned fields of a foreign country, with the high, thin voice of a Spanish boy singing in the distance of "the day I was born".

Critics & Crusaders

By CHARLES A. MADISON

AT ALL BOOKSTORES

HENRY HOLT & COMPANY

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The Saturday Review of Literature

Should Fighting Men Think?

DAVID L. COHN

OUR tragic failure in this war—one which may well cause us to lose the eventual peace—was our failure in what the Army calls orientation. The Army meaning of this unfortunate word is instruction to our soldiers as to what the war was about. The War Department said that the objectives of the Army Orientation Course are:

(a) To acquaint all recruits with factual information as to the causes and events leading to the United States becoming a combatant in a global war in December 1941.

(b) To inform all military personnel of the principles for which we are fighting and of the danger to American principles arising from Axis policies and Axis aggressions.

(c) To inform all military personnel on the nature of the enemy, as a supplement to their regular training.

(d) To fix in the mind of the American soldier a sense of the importance of his personal rôle and responsibilities in the current struggle.

This was an admirable program. It illuminated the words of Mr. Justice Holmes, which are so true as to have the force of a maxim: "To fight out a war you must believe something and want something with all your might"; or, as Oliver Cromwell put it, "Give the man who knows that for which he fights and loves that which he knows."

As the Army saw it, the American soldier was to be, "not just the best-trained soldier in the world, not just the best-equipped soldier in the world, but the *best-informed* soldier in the world." This was all to the good, and the soldier was to be brought to a state of intellectual grace, so far as his rôle in the war was concerned, by compelling him to devote, as his duties allowed, one hour a week to classroom instruction in orientation.

In *Fact Sheet*, Number One, under the general subject "Know Why We Fight," Army Orientation put it this way:

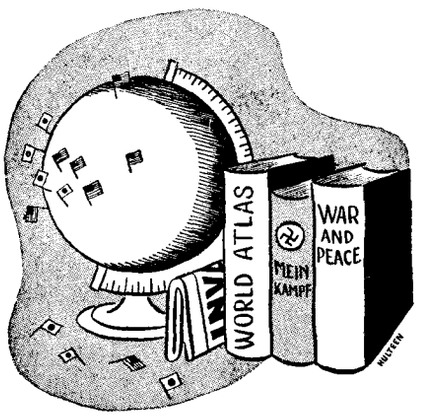
> Suppose the mayor of your town set about to tell you how and where you must live, the work you must do, the education you must have, who must be your friends, what newspapers you must read, what religion you must have, whom you must marry, how your children must be raised—
>
> How would YOU feel about it?
> You'd be mad as hell!
> What would YOU do about it?
> You'd get rid of him and his cronies, and boy,
> How you'd fight to do it!
>
> That's one way of illustrating what the Axis Powers are planning to do to other nations—and they'll use everything they've got to do it! They plan to dominate the world. We fight to destroy that plan—prevent that domination!

Attacking the German concept of the master race, the soldier was told:

> This is like sayings guys named Smith are better than guys named Jones!
>
> There is no scientific basis in anthropology or psychiatry which would support the contention that "race" determines social behavior. To put it plainly, there is no such thing as a "master" race!

But—

> In Germany the National Socialists cooked up the idea that the German (Ayran) was a pure-blooded race. . . . Then they insisted that those of pure blood were a *superior* race. It wasn't long before they ballyhooed the idea that the Germans were a *master race* to which all others should be subjects or slaves. . . .



In refutation of this concept, *Fact Sheet* published the "self-evident" clause of the Declaration of Independence; combating the idea of the Axis all-powerful state, it quoted the American Bill of Rights. In a section devoted to "KNOW THE ENEMY," the soldier was told that he was strong, well equipped, and fanatical, while in another section, "KNOW YOUR ALLIES," simple facts were put about the members of the United Nations. Finally, the objectives of orientation were summed up. It was pointed out that formerly armies fought in comparatively close order, making it relatively easy to maintain in combat discipline, precision of action, and personal leadership. In the modern world men fought in small groups and as individuals, making it more difficult to sustain group morale, thereby increasing the urgency of raising individual morale. This had a "direct bearing on combat efficiency . . . on combat survival," for the reason that "inner psychological strength springs from an impelling belief in the mission and a sense of urgency about getting at the enemy. If the soldier is not so armed psychologically, he may be just as vulnerable in combat as if he were improperly trained or poorly equipped. If he is so armed, even if he is alone, pinned to the ground by a curtain of fire, he will not be demoralized by the inevitable question, 'Why am I here?'"

Despite the excellent intentions of the War Department and its clear understanding of the overwhelming importance of orientation, the program was, I believe, largely a failure. The reasons lie within our national body as well as within the Army.

There is a rough analogy between the plight of college education—especially in state institutions of so-called learning — and that of Army orientation. The bewildered men who run these mass-production diploma mills say they could do a good job if they had a chance, but their task is impossible because at least half of the student body is composed of idiots

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"Sometimes seeing their wounding, dying, and hardships, one felt that they were better than the nation which bred them; that they had risen above it as a child rises above a profligate, irresponsible father who has taught it nothing that is good . . ."

and much of the remainder falls into these groups:

(a) Those whose mental growth has been stultified in high school by overworked and underpaid women teachers who began teaching as a stopgap to marriage and kept on teaching when they failed to catch a man; and subjection to Mom's ideas which she got by reading women's magazines and attending culture club lectures.

(b) Those who go to State in order to make "contacts" that will be useful to them later when they practise law or doctor cows in Itta Bena.

(c) The savants who conclude early in life that a B.A. and a bank account are the same thing.

(d) Those who decide that spending four years at college is a good way of staying out of Pop's hay business for just that long—an arrangement which is equally agreeable to Pop, even if he pays the bills, because he is hep to Junior.

YEARS ago as a student at the University of Virginia when it had a total enrolment of only seven hundred men, at the opening of term President Alderman said to me wearily, "All over the South today parents are putting their sons on the train to come to the university. The sons do not know why they are coming. The parents do not know why they are sending them." Nonetheless, admittance to a state university cannot be denied a student even when he is demonstrably a cretin, for so passionate is our devotion to democracy that it embraces equality of idiocy as well as equality of opportunity. Consequently, the Moms and Pops of this happy land of ours, having done nothing to stimulate Junior's or Sister's mental growth while they were under what is called the parental roof, dump them on the campus of State and expect its unhappy teachers to educate the uneducable.

The plight of Army orientation was not altogether dissimilar. It dealt with masses of men of every degree of mental equipment and education. As state colleges are called upon, not only to educate the student, but to do for him what had not been done for him in his home, so the Army had to attempt to give the soldier a rudimentary political education and do for him what his civilization had not done for him. His political perspectives, like those of the nation, were not broad but narrow. He was ill-informed about international affairs. He was a citizen of a country which had never made up its mind about its relationships to other peoples, but had merely essayed the impossible feat of being in the world but not of it. This was a program of evasion rather than a positive policy. It was one that we apparently took over from the Indians while taking them over. They, too, wanted to be let alone, but evasion is not likely to be more successful in our case than it was in theirs. Many of our men were therefore bewildered to find themselves soldiers. They did not know why they fought beyond the negative necessity of defense. Thus they found themselves plunged accidentally, as they thought, into the supreme crisis of their lives with no sense of its origin and without goal or direction for the future, since none had been given them. Under these circumstances the enormously important task of orientation was neither simple nor easy.

This generation of soldiers, moreover, was brought up in the intellectual and moral confusions of the twenties, and suffered the soul-chilling economic depression of the thirties. Between the wars dozens of so-called intellectuals, in and out of the colleges, dinned it into their ears that we got nothing out of the First World War, we were suckers, other nations were leeches sucking our blood, it might have been better to stay out of the war, and in the future we ought to be "realistic"—that is, do nothing. These preachments sapped American idealism, struck at the roots of American common sense, and developed a dangerous and paralyzing form of nihilism. If some of the preachers pontifically recanted their former views when they saw at last the crisis to which their stupidities had brought us, the damage was nonetheless done.

It is little short of a miracle, then, that our men fought with such courage, stubbornness, and devotion unto death; that in this respect, as in all others, they matched and surpassed their fanatical enemies. Sometimes seeing their wounding, dying and hardships, one felt that they were better than the nation which bred them; that they had risen above it as a child rises above a profligate, irresponsible father who has taught it nothing that is good and who, by his actions, has not permitted it to forget anything that is bad.

It was obviously difficult in any event to foster the political development of so large and diverse a group of men, while the difficulty was the greater for any army scattered around the world and necessarily intent first upon the most urgent tasks in hand. For some time, therefore, it used orientation in the simpler task of making a better soldier of a man, but later it moved nearer to the British concept of orientation.

The British, like ourselves, wanted to make better soldiers of their men, but at the same time they tried to foster their political development. They wanted them to discuss their problems and their relations to the world. Consequently, they did not disseminate war news as news of the day—merely a number of unrelated factual items—but as a "background against which events can be assessed and understood." The very essence of British orientation was *discussion;* free discussion among thirty or forty men in a group led by a competent officer chairman. It was based upon an assigned weekly topic and a background pamphlet written, not by the Army, but by a famous English scholar, which was sent to group leaders to

(*Continued on page* 33)

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South of Vera Cruz

MEXICO SOUTH: THE ISTHMUS OF TEHUANTEPEC. By Miguel Covarrubias. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1946. 411 *pp.* $7.50.

Reviewed by DUNCAN AIKMAN

EVEN at its price, this book is something of a bargain. The publisher evidently has put more than a publisher's normal share of 750 pretty pennies simply into manufacturing it. Its 500-odd pages of thick-bodied paper turn under the hand, not like economically sliced blotting pulp but as pre-war pages once did. Large, uncrowded type moves across them between wide margins with a positively sensuous eye-beguilement after so many years of space-saving abomination. Covarrubias's scores of fascinating line drawings cling to them as if put there to stay, instead of merely waiting to be obliterated by exposure to the sun or the first bad child's eraser. Quite apart from content, if you didn't know how starved you were physically for a book "as is a book," pick up "Mexico South," and you'll find out.

The content, though, lives up to the window dressing. Miguel Covarrubias, who made a somewhat deceptive reputation as a caricaturist of cafe society and politicians just before the last torches of the 1920's exploded, is also one of Mexico's outstanding archeologists and anthropologists. Into "Mexico South" he has poured the results of nearly a quarter of a century of researches on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

The Isthmus is the place a little south of Vera Cruz where the continental land mass shrinks to a width of 120 miles and the Alaska-to-Cape-Horn Cordillera drops down to foothills no taller than Kansas prairie swells. Cortez played with the idea of building an inter-oceanic canal there, and the British eventually did build a railroad. Much more exotically, it has a worldwide reputation as being the last spot in civilization where Christian-indoctrinated women bathe naked in the rivers and where bronzed and dominant goddesses live with their lesser menfolk in a kind of perpetual polyandrous idyll. Consequently, Mexico's sex jokes cluster about Tehuantepec a good deal as most of ours in the moron decades have clustered about Mae West and Hollywood.

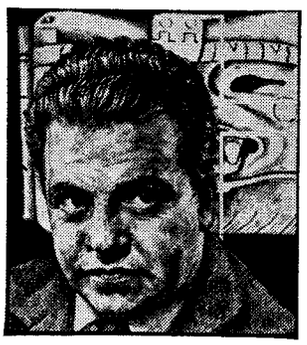
On most of this legend Covarrubias puts the fiddlesticks sign. By his account, polyandrous impulses and "infidelities" generally are held in check as well as they are in any tropical environment where "benefits of clergy" are largely restricted to the well-to-do. The virtually public tests for pucellehood in Tehuantepec brides are sufficiently thoroughgoing to abash Wellesley. Nor are Tehuantepec's men mice—or even lapdogs. They merely happen to be busy and relatively out of sight most days doing the farm and the outdoor heavy work—while their wives, daughters, and mothers-in-law, by a not uncommon division of labor among what Mary Austin might have called the Latin-Amerinds, prefer to cultivate their leisure profitably by conducting the town markets. From sundown on, otherwise Tehuantepec life is definitely more family huddle than it is for stenographers, authoresses, or lady executives in Manhattan or Binghamton.

But Covarrubias is only incidentally interested in legend-pricking. Tehuantepec's importance in his eyes is that of a bridgehead between early American civilizations—the place where the Mayan, the almost pre-historic Olmec cultures, the Zapotecs, and the later Toltecs and Aztecs met, mingled, and influenced each other. The gigantic heads of baby-faced gods in football headgear, newly discovered in the Isthmian jungles at La Venta, the primitive jaguar figures of the region, arouse in him the speculation that the lost origins of the pre-Colombian civilizations may be found along this narrow pathway between North and Central America.

Easily half of "Mexico South" deals with their dark and confused past—its legends, its scant history, and its art and utility remnants. It is not easy going. But the end product is a solid re-creation—the story, or as much of it as can be pieced together today, of the coming of age of civilizations in a single locality. Moreover, putting the succession of the cultures and their borrowings from each other in one geographical package, so to speak, helps to make the development focus. It lacks some of the sequence of pre-Colombian history, as it has been written by scholars from Prescott to Philip A. Means; but in its way, it is even nearer to life.

Covarrubias's devoutly exact line drawings of so many of the relics of the old civilizations which have been preserved, strengthen the focus. So do his accounts of the Indian peoples of Tehuantepec and the tributary regions who have kept—Covarrubias feels—more of the spirit and tempo of the old life down today than Indians elsewhere: the Mixes, the Chontals, the Huaves, and, above all, the Zapotecs. All of these have preserved their languages, especially the Zapotecs, who keep theirs in spite of considerable overlayers of Spanish culture and admixture of Spanish blood; and who, incidentally, gave modern Mexico her foremost civilizing statesman Benito Juarez.

The Zapotecs set the social molds of Tehuantepec life today, for the centuries before Montezuma lesser tribes were mere hill-billies. Plainly, they



THE AUTHOR: Miguel Covarrubias was a famous caricaturist at seventeen; at twenty-one he designed the sets for a Theatre Guild production of "Androcles and the Lion," brought the life of Harlem to *Vanity Fair* magazine in a series of brilliant delineations, and filled a book called "The Prince of Wales and Other Famous Americans" with his caricatures. He went on to become a painter, photographer, archeologist, sociologist, anthropologist, and geographer. He forsook the postures of civilization which he saw so clearly and set down so sharply, and went off with his wife, Rose, to study the simple societies. The first result of this was "Island of Bali," a book rich with Covarrubias paintings, prose, and drawings, plus the splendid photographs of Mrs. Covarrubias. The two worked on "Mexico South" for more than three years. Covarrubias was born in Mexico City on November 22, 1905, the son of the Director of the National Lottery. At fifteen he left school and struck out for himself; in a few years his drawings were in Mexican and Cuban magazines and were syndicated throughout South America. His government commissioned him to do a mural; he decorated the famous Los Monotes restaurant, where he worked as a caricaturist and was known as Chamaco the Kid. The government finally sent him to New York on a three months' scholarship; he stayed in Manhattan, got a job, and was immediately successful. Anthropology and archeology, once his hobbies, have now become his art and his work. His maps, paintings, drawings, photographs, prose, and caricatures all work together now to tell the story of how people became what they are, and why.

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are a good people to have social molds set by: gay, charming, cheerfully communal in their economics and fiestas, with stomachs for rich tropical cooking and enough love of life to set their women free to share it. Even their beliefs in witchcraft are atoned for by an almost psychoanalytical sanity. For Covarrubias tells us that one of their methods of curing a "fear spell" is to ride the patient through town facing rearward on a burro and force him to tell his amused but sympathetic fellow-citizens what he is afraid of.

Eight color plates of Covarrubias's brightest paintings help to bring this life closer to us. So do the frequent unselfconscious, and hence non-purple, passages of strong painter's words in the Covarrubias style. For instance, when the rickety Tehuantepec train fills up with flower and fruit vendors, "their brilliant red, lemon-yellow, and purple costumes, their gold jewelry and black shawls make the cars suddenly to blossom like floats for a parade. . . . Overhead fly flocks of screeching green parrots."

Whatever it fails to tell us about the problems of the atomic age "Mexico South" is a good book to have around; not for escapism, perhaps, but certainly for mellowness.

Maximilian and Carlota Again

MEXICAN EMPIRE. By H. Montgomery Hyde. London: The Macmillan Co. 1946. 350 pp. $5.

Reviewed by ELIZABETH FAGG

EVER since its collapse, the short-lived, ill-fated Second Mexican Empire has been a favorite theme for the historian. And with good reason. The tale of that incredible interlude, 1864-1867, when ambitious European royalty sought a phantom crown in a phantom empire, to their own self-destruction, has no peer among New World legends for color and dramatic incident. Maximilian and Carlota, the chief actors, long ago became the enchanted prince and princess of a fairy castle (Chapultepec), more legendary than real even though they did not live happily ever after. Just because they didn't, posterity has placed them in the high-flown ranks of the world's magnificent failures, remembered for spectacular defeat more than they would have been in success.

To the already volumnious literature about the famous pair, Lieut.-Colonel H. Montgomery Hyde adds a historical biography, "Mexican Empire: The History of Maximilian and Carlota of Mexico." It is a competent review of the highlights of the French intervention in Mexico, written for the general reader who has neither time nor inclination for details. Focusing on the Archduke, the author follows him through his youth in the Austrian court with his brother Franz Joseph, later Austrian emperor, his early travels in the Mediterranean and to Brazil, his marriage to the dark-eyed Carlota, his acceptance at Miramar of the Mexican crown, to his brave, pathetic death before a firing squad on a beautiful Mexican morning, June 19, 1867.

The story is well-balanced, with materials wisely selected on the whole. The author scrupulously refrains from fictionizing, never stepping into his characters' shoes, or attributing thoughts or feelings. He quotes frequently directly or indirectly, from the vast personal and official correspondence of the couple, and appears to have a documented source for nearly every statement in his book.

His restraint, plus a slightly Victorian style, makes less spirited reading than in the lively (but often factually erroneous) "Phantom Crown," by Bertita Harding, which predecessor enjoyed eight printings in the last decade. But fact is so fascinating, adventure so high, that mere narration of salient events of the episode, than which this account is little more, makes a tale stronger-than-fiction any day of the week.

The Intervention scholar will find little he does not already know. There is no original research of an outstanding order, no new source materials. And there has not been at

—From "Mexico South."

The brilliant costumes and gold jewelry of the flower and fruit vendors make the trains "blossom like floats for a parade."

play any special literary gift for evoking the past or molding the figures of the drama into more three-dimensional contours than literature has already given them. Close students of Egon Caesar Count Corti's distinguished two-volume biography "Maximilian and Charlotte of Mexico" the definitive work in the field will say Hyde's Intervention chapters follow Corti too closely. Words and phrases often tally exactly, sequences run parallel. But equally disconcerting are sudden, unexplained differences on points of fact. Hyde, for instance, says Maximilian slept on a billiard table because of vermin in his bed, his first night in Chapultepec Castle; Corti, in Mexico's National Palace. They disagree again on the date of Carlota's mental breakdown in the Vatican. The differences in fact are minor and perhaps only reflect use of different source materials. The similarities of style may merely indicate reference to the same sources. But both are likely to jar the student.

Even for a resume, parts of the story are sketchy. The peculiar European political stew of the 1860's which brewed the Tripartite Intervention is only suggested. The Spanish and English withdrawal, after troops were already in Mexico, is airily dismissed in a single sentence. The Vatican's role in encouraging Napoleon III in the Intervention and its meddling in Mexican internal politics at this period is soft-pedaled. One scarcely sees the dynamic Indian patriot Benito Juárez except as a dim figure offstage.

On the other hand, fate's disposition of the secondary actors is excellently detailed. Noteworthy, too, is evidence that the royal couple, contrary to general opinion, were unhappily married. Indeed, the author accepts that Maximilian had an illegitimate Mexican son who became a German agent in Paris during World War I and was executed, refusing, like his father, to be blindfolded, as an officer read: "Sedano y Leguizano, son of the Emperor Maximilian of Mexico, you will be shot as a traitor."

It takes only hindsight now to say the French Intervention was foredoomed. But wags then talked of Napoleon III's "archdupe." And wise observers knew France couldn't sustain the venture militarily, nor the Monroe indoctrinated United States, Civil War or no, ultimately tolerate a European-puppet neighbor. Yet, once committed by ambition to their great mistake, the Hapsburg and his Belgian princess played their roles with gameness, dignity, and idealism worthy of the gods. Their decisions, as this account above all shows, were often wrong, never uncourageous.

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Under the Russian Blanket

EAST OF THE IRON CURTAIN. By William Van Narvig. New York: Ziff-Davis. 1946. 361 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by EDGAR ANSEL MOWRER

THIS is an alarming book about the Soviet Union by a man of mixed parentage, now an American citizen, who was born, brought up, and spent over half of his life in Russia. He fought with the Russian armies during World War One and underwent the Russian Revolution. Since then he has made long visits to the country of his birth.

Although his ostensible purpose is to explain the "dual nature" (native good nature and maniacal xenophobia) of the Russian people, he obviously feels toward them about as Lord Vansittart does towards the Germans. In his view they are incurably hostile to the Western democratic world and any refusal by Western democrats to face this fact can lead only to disaster.

The first chapter gives a conversation with a "typical Russian," Ivan Agafonovitch, who explained to the author that until foreign capitalists had been eliminated and all foreign workers had accepted Soviet ideas, "there could be no real understanding between the Soviet peoples and other nations."

Totalitarian communism, in other words, is accepted by the masses under it, less because it is communistic than because it is Russian. The Iron Curtain is not something forced upon the Soviet peoples but the blanket they deliberately draw over their heads so great is their suspicion and dislike of foreigners. Van Narvig quotes a personal conversation with Lenin during the revolution in which the latter, explaining that Western ideas would "ruin" Russians, stated: "Of course I am a nationalist. I am a Russian. I am also enough of a realist to know that our brand of revolution is typically Russian, attuned to the ardent desires of the Russian people and of no other, at least not now."

The Russians, according to this author, are the world's prize provincials. They make the pan-Germans and Nazis and Italian fascisti seem almost like world citizens in comparison.

Equipped with this basic view, Van Narvig plunges into a detailed study of Soviet facts and intentions and comes to some depressing conclusions.

Lenin also said: "The Russian mind is totally different from the Western mind." This view was shared by that great American student of Russian affairs the late Professor Samuel Harper and by many others. I myself,

—*Fitzpatrick in the* St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

"Private Bath?"

though widely traveled, have found the psychology of frankly exotic peoples like the Chinese easier to understand than that of many I met in Moscow. To the Russians, many of the conceptions that fill American lives—personal liberty, self-government, individual dignity, and responsibility—seem meaningless.

Trotzky, a Jew, was converted to international communism—and failed. Lenin and Stalin after him created a purely Russian kind of communism. This is the reason why it is impossible to say whether Russia today is more communist or more nationalist. Van Narvig thinks the two are virtually identical. He says that the Russian brand will not work in any other country. Since the Soviet system is being imitated in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, his theory will be tested.

The Russians deify one individual. Therefore although the Politbureau and not Stalin actually rules, "to the Russian mind today, everything belongs to Stalin as in bygone days everything belonged to the Czar."

Zhdanov, this writer believes, is the man Stalin has picked to be the next god.

The Secret Police strengthens the natural tendency of all Russians not to trust any foreigners. (This might account for the contemptuous way in which fairly important non-Russian Communists are habitually treated in Moscow.)

Russia under Czar Alexander suppressed freedom in Europe in favor of the State just as Stalin, to the best of his ability, is doing now.

In contemporary Russia, labor has been crushed into line. Today ninety per cent of Russian workers are on a peculiarly cruel piece-wage basis. To strike is treason and carries the death penalty without right of appeal. Each individual plant is run on the profit system and managers are much better off relatively than in the United States. Higher Communists and managers pay low taxes and have acquired a monopoly of higher education for their children. The new "communist superclass is perpetuating itself in power and luxury."

The birth-rate is being forced, even by accepting as fathers the three million German prisoners working as slaves. No longer can a Russian working girl hope to become an engineer or a physician. Women do a lot of the drudgery.

The author quotes with approval Brooks Atkinson's remark that the Soviet Union "does not reciprocate America's passionate devotion to the ideal of international understanding." Instead, the Soviets further militarism as unashamedly as pre-war Prussia did.

Van Narvig's estimate of the number of political slave workers goes almost as high as the twenty million estimated by Victor Kravchenko.

He believes that the Russians will not be content to stay within their present enlarged boundaries. Young Russians are being taught that their country won the war (including that against the Japs!) virtually unaided. Russia is rebuilding military power, not against Germany (that is camouflage, Van Narvig believes) but against Britain. The stake is the possession of the Mediterranean. For while Russians must have the "open sea" other countries must stay out of "Russia's pastures." Actually, Russian history is just one long story of conquest by force labeled "liberation."

There is a good account of what has happened to the recently "liberated" countries of eastern Europe.

Germany, too, is "ripe." For as the Russians see it, the German mentality is closer to theirs than to that of Western democrats. A necessary step is the prevention of the Western Bloc by any and all means.

In addition the Moslems must be "freed" and the Colonial peoples "liberated" until such time as they can be tucked into their appropriate

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 668)

MASON:
BRANDEIS: A FREE MAN'S LIFE

He was moved by the wrongs of economic privilege, by human . . . exploitation, but what moved him more was public apathy and moral obtuseness in the face of social abuses. . . . To Brandeis "the greatest menace to freedom is an inert people."

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corners of the Soviet world state. China should be "democratized" if the United States will permit.

Because of our industrial power, "Russia today concedes to the United States—and only to the United States—an almost equal voice in world affairs." This is why another Soviet generation must be half starved in order that Soviet industrial power shall outstrip American.

It must be obvious why, if Van N. is right, the Soviets preserve secrecy. For to trumpet abroad a plan of continual conquest would be folly. Foreigners free to roam about the Soviet Union would learn too much. "There will be a state of war for all the Russians until the Western world submits meekly to all Russian demands or is ground to dust."

This idea is behind Soviet insistence on the veto and the Soviet conception of the United Nations. "Russia wants to rule the world, with the aid of other members of the Big Three if they are willing to cooperate with her. If they do not want to cooperate for this purpose Russia will go her own way." Soviet and German scientists are working feverishly on the atom bomb. There are two new laboratories near Mount Alagoez in Transcaucasia, one formerly in charge of Peter Kapitza who has just been banished to Siberia for unknown reasons.

At the end comes the Slavic Era.

This book ends on the note on which it began—two worlds, worlds apart. Therefore, the author thinks America's proper course is clear—to stand by Britain and China. Bold and fearless leadership by the United States, the only nation with the requisite strength, could lead to a union of peace-loving nations drawn together whether Russia liked it or not.

"With the rest of the world standing firmly together, Russia would have no recourse but to play ball with them."

Van N. states a good many known facts and adds a few less known items of his own that his reviewer is not in a position to check. It is striking that his conclusions are those of others who have spent long periods in Moscow—Louis Fischer, Bullitt, Dave Dallin, and of course Kravchenko—rather than those of Frederick Schuman and Henry Wallace whose observation of that country was brief.

A debate between, say, Van N. and Kravchenko on the one side and Henry Wallace and Edward C. Carter on the other would be instructive.

"East of the Iron Curtain" ought to be read by all Americans who, observing the more accommodating Soviet attitude at Lake Success, might be tempted prematurely to decide that harmony between Moscow and the democracies is just around the corner.

Your Literary I.Q.

By Howard Collins

SOME MEMORABLE BIRTHS IN FICTION

Unusual circumstances surrounded the fictional births that are briefly described below. Can you recall the characters involved? Allowing five points for each one you can name and another five for the author who created him, a score of 60 is par, 70 is very good, and 80 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 25.

1. This lusty man-child was born out of his mother's left ear and immediately started yelling for a drink.
2. The doctor's forceps slipped and spoiled the shape of this child's nose, a point about which his father was very sensitive.
3. This peasant woman ceased her toiling in the rice field long enough to give birth to her first son and returned to work the next day.
4. In a city set aflame by enemy troops, with no doctor available, this war bride gave birth to her first child.
5. Perceiving that her newly-born child was dying, this unwed mother christened it herself.
6. In a freight car partially immersed in flood waters which were rising by the minute, this deserted wife gave birth to a still-born child.
7. En route to join her soldier-lover, this distracted girl gave birth to a child in the woods, hid it under a bush, and returned to the scene several hours later to learn that it had been found dead.
8. When this Hollywood waitress gave birth to a child in a movie producer's office, a couple of script writers launched it on the way to stardom with a brand new scenario.
9. This Negro girl had her first child right in the middle of a road so she named him Unexpected.
10. This girl was born, brought up, and eventually married in Marshalsea Prison, where her father was confined for debt.

Fighting Brass

COMMAND DECISION. By William Wister Haines. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1947. 258 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by FLETCHER PRATT

ONE of the odder literary characteristics of World War II has been the absence of commanders from its literature. Partly, no doubt, this is due to the army policy which prohibited the mention of anyone between a sergeant and a lieutenant-general in press dispatches from the front, partly to the general impression that has grown up ever since the declining days of the previous conflict that anyone from a colonel up is a frozen-faced fuddy-duddy.

A novel that deals with the problems facing a brigadier-general and which says they are by no means the same or even of the same order as the problems encountered by a major-general, therefore comes with an effect of freshness, of novelty almost to the point of shock. The current exhibit is perhaps not one of the greater books of our time. The characters tend to be institutionally typed, and if the conclusion means what I think it does, the author is saying that any honest and reasonably competent man would have decided the difficult questions facing General Dennis in exactly the same way. Of course, if this is true there is not very much justification for General Dennis; but fortunately for himself and for the reader, Mr. Haines has spent all but a couple of pages in his book in saying something quite different, and saying it with a high degree of emotional intensity.

"Command Decision" is also a novel about the background of war, the constant and harrowing necessity for conducting operations that will look good in the newspapers in order to get the materials and support necessary for victory in the field. The literary material with which Mr. Haines is dealing thus requires him to make some of his major characters look pretty black in the eyes of others, and at the same time to present the point of view from which all is clear and justifiable. It is an extremely difficult assignment, which he has handled with a skill worthy of the highest praise. What is more, he has brought off successfully the difficult job of telling his story almost entirely through dialogue so brilliantly written that it always strikes exactly the correct note. "Command Decision" is easy to read and worth reading, whether as a story or for the implications that come with it.

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Witch Doctor Psychoanalyzed

BLACK ANGER. By Wulf Sachs. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1947. 324 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by ROBERT PITKIN

"AND thus," Dr. Sachs concludes his book—an immensely interesting work, as may just as well be stated at once—"it was that this story, which was to have been about John, the subject of a psychoanalytic study to be read by a limited number of scientists, became the story of John, the man, written to be read by everyone."

The John in question is John Chavafambira, a Rhodesian *nganga* or witch doctor, or rather, when the story opens, the son of a famous *ngnanga,* by tribal law as yet prevented from practising. Difficult family circumstances—there never will be an end to them in John's life—have driven him from his kraal and across the frontier. When Dr. Sachs meets him, John is working as a waiter in Johannesburg, is married (not very happily) to a lazy, half-invalid Zulu woman, and is living in near-penury.

Notwithstanding his close contacts with white men, John's belief in supernatural forces is as strong as it was in his native hamlet. His being a Christian has never altered his dependence on the ancient deities and, above all, on his Penates, the *midzimu.* For the dead are not dead to Africans. Yet "the sensational stories about African witch doctors current in tabloids," Dr. Sachs says—and he proves it—"are largely a product of the imagination." While to the primitive African "the belief in witchcraft is real and logical [and] there is no such thing [to him] as imaginary feelings," the *ngangas* themselves are simply quacks practising among people entirely deprived of any health service. They willingly turn to the white medicine man if given a chance—as Dr. Sachs experienced on his visit with John in his Rhodesian village. At that time he already knew him intimately, and could fully grasp the disaster that befell the *nganga* on the very eve of his formal initiation. As sheer drama, that story, involving the most complicated clan intrigues as well as John's first real love, has the power of a Greek tragedy.

Probably Dr. Sachs had in his acquaintance with John been attracted first by the amazing similarities of African symbolism with certain Freudian dream symbols. To the lay reader of his book the numerous reports John gives of his dreams may sometimes be wearisome; but John's own tradition-bound explanations of them open true storehouses of anthropological information which make engrossing reading.

The contemporary South African, as the Rhodesian, tribesman lives in a kind of mental no-man's land between urban civilization and the oddly subdued primitivity of his kraal. He is on the verge of losing all his sentimental attachments, yet fears nothing more than their magic power. The young who flock to town live a Jekyll-and-Hyde existence, beggarly laborers today, dignified heirs of ancient wisdom tomorrow. There is no one to replace what knowledge or superstitions they have with enlightened conceptions. Far from fighting the "kaffir's" illiteracy, his white master —whether British, Dutch, or Jewish —keeps him down through it.

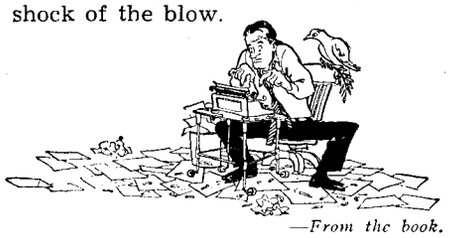
The picture Dr. Sachs paints of racial discrimination in the Union of South Africa goes beyond anything we may have imagined. According to him, the South African Negro is not merely exploited, barred from all educational opportunities, in nowise looked after by government agencies, fettered by a maze of restrictive laws, but also—within that doubtful legality—constantly wronged and hit at by the vicious, malignant enforcement of all kinds of petty police regulations and a virtual autocracy of the lower courts. However far an individual may go through self-education and endurance, he never can better his position. John Chavafambria went pretty far while his white friend, the psychoanalyst, watched him. But he had to undergo every conceivable humiliation and every human hardship before he gained the vision which gave him new hope. As Dr. Sachs left Johannesburg, John asked him "to tell the people in the United States . . . how it was with his people in Africa, how alone, how isolated they were in their misery, with no one in the world to appeal to."

"Commando Method" Humor

SO THIS IS PEACE. By Bob Hope. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1946. 84 *pp.* $1.

Reviewed by GEORGE BAKER

ON the first page of his new book, "So This Is Peace," Bob Hope devotes a sentence to an offhand description of his laugh-getting technique. He employs what he calls, "The Commando Method"; strike hard and fast and get away in a hurry. Mr. Hope uses that method with such telling effect that by the end of the first chapter the reader is figuratively left beat and bleeding from his relentless barrage of gags. A new subject is introduced only to be ambushed and disintegrated by the punch line lying in wait two sentences later. And the panorama changes so fast that the reader, if he blinks his eyes during a capsule comment on Bing Crosby's toupee, is likely to find himself in the midst of a dissertation on Madman Muntz. After a time, however, this galloping commentary begins to take on the steady rhythm of a hopped-up metronome and, in a startling display of reflex action, the reader can anticipate the gag line and dissipate the shock of the blow.



—*From the book.*

Hope, Dove of Peace, Olive Branch.

About the time the reader gets into his mental foxhole, Mr. Hope changes his stance, if not his punch line, and sets out to thoroughly confuse and outpoint his audience. He shifts his weight from the subjects and personalities of the post-war scene (which he was only using as a warm-up) and dives backward into his experiences and adventures of wartime entertaining.

Once Mr. Hope gets himself into his USO uniform, which consists of an overseas cap and a C-54, he recaptures the charm that made him the fair-haired favorite of the armed forces.

Bob Hope bursts and bubbles over with anecdotes and stories set to gag-time and seems thoroughly at home in his military playground. Here Mr. Hope is in an element that does justice to his energy and imagination. Here he can barter a song and dance for plane transportation to London, and bombard a Jap-held island with empty milk bottles. Here, at the drop of a rumor, an audience totaling into the thousands will crawl out of coral rock, palm trees, or industrial wreckage to see him. Here, too, one can catch a glimpse, between the corn stalks, of the prodigious job Mr. Hope and his troupe performed in bringing a laugh to the already forgotten man —the soldier.

There are few subjects in "So This Is Peace" that are sacred enough to escape being ground to mince meat by the Hope gag machine. In the rare moments where his subject matter is

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unmarred by comedy treatment, Mr. Hope emerges as a man of compassion and understanding. It takes a Dachau or a hospitalized vet to make him play straight man. But as a good straight man, he adds stature to the clown.

"So This Is Peace" is actually a sequel to "I Never Left Home." Mr. Hope makes a concession to his title by devoting the early portion of his book to the post-war world, but drops it with relief to pick up the trail of his wartime travels. This book includes his Pacific swing and his last European tour for the USO prior to V-J Day. It is generously illustrated with amusing sketches by Lew Glanzman.

Ivory Village

SMALL TOWN. By Granville Hicks. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1946. 276 pp. $3.

Reviewed by ROBERT S. LYND

THIS book derives from a general conviction that I respect deeply. Mr. Hicks believes that democracy is worth making an effort for; that the people in all the little communities at the grass roots must be intimately and continuously involved in that effort; that intelligence must both identify itself closely with those people and their problems and also lead them—although "certainly the position of the intellectual today is a dubious and unhappy one"; and that one way to begin is for "intellectuals" to discover "the people" by going to live among them. His book is, accordingly, more than simply the latest version of "city-intellectual-returns-to - village - and - discovers - fellow - human-beings."

The dozen chapters fall into three sections: (1) The story of the author's development as an intellectual, including Harvard, college teaching, and in the 1930's his joining and later leaving the Communist Party. (It is too bad that this last double act of honesty and courage should leave such a stain in our middle-class society that Mr. Hicks must be forever anxiously trying to explain and repudiate this part of himself.) (2) Several chapters analyzing the New York State town of 800 people where he has lived and in whose life he has learned to participate increasingly since 1932. The two of these chapters dealing with the ways of thought and with salient aspects of human nature in the town are especially worth reading. (3) A less successful final bloc of chapters on the difficult problem of the relation of grass-roots communities to the planning of the larger society.

There is a warmth and perceptiveness about Mr. Hicks's approach to his neighbors that makes the book fascinating in its detail: the discussion of the role of conversation in the small town; the pervasive tendency of these small-town folk to avoid confronting issues squarely; the hanging back in public that makes "I'm not sticking my neck out" the unconscious motto of the town; the intense suspiciousness of motives, "which may in part serve as a defensive rationalization of inaction"; the endless enforced accommodations in the intensely personalized naked exposure of people to each other and to all of each other in the small town with its "mysterious grudges and unspoken grievances"; the difference between the intellectual's and the villager's mental processes.

Yet, despite this wealth of detail, the book fails in its over-all impact. Such an essentially personal document necessarily reflects both the strengths and the weaknesses of its author. Mr. Hicks is an ardent person —a valuable trait in the generally blurred "cageyness" of American life. But Mr. Hicks's kind of ardor tends to make him a black-and-whiter. A decade ago, as a new convert to the Communist Party, he almost outdid the Party in his denunciations of the craven souls who remained outside its ranks; then, later, after he resigned from the Party, everybody remaining in that organization as well as everything in the Soviet Union was in turn denounced by him. Now he plumps for the small town. And it is a good thing to be "for," in view of the decay of local vitality in mass society.

But let's get the record straight.

—*George Cole.*

Granville Hicks: "The position of the intellectual today is a dubious, unhappy one."

One cannot put on and off ideologies as though they were topcoats. Mr. Hicks points out shortcomings in his socialist beliefs in the 1920's, but he does not challenge the central fact of the unremitting growth of private economic power. The young Granville Hicks, to whose views the middle-aged Mr. Hicks is now rather condescending, would have noted that the structure of power in American life makes it increasingly Utopian to expect the reconquest of the nation for democracy from the grass roots up, against the spreading massed controls from the top down of monopoly capitalism. Certainly Mr. Hicks gives us little ground for hope of this democratic victory in his discussion of education and of civic irresponsibility in this book about the small town he knows best. And yet, stated with many qualifications, it is something like this dream that Mr. Hicks here offers us: He quotes in support of his thesis the Lilienthal emphasis on decentralized administration, yet he goes on to note that the common people of the Tennessee Valley do not seem to feel that what is going on there is their own. He failed entirely on his trip to the TVA to see that the "grass roots policy" of the TVA involves collaboration primarily with *organizations* within the going power structure.

Mr. Hicks is right in recognizing the potential power in the little people of America; but it is sheer moonshine to expect them to find and to exercise this power to build more democracy within the present coercions of monopoly capitalism. Standing in the wreckage of the "small-town decay," as he calls it and which he describes so well, Mr. Hicks disclaims any "desire to do away with capitalism"; he wants simply "to prevent our economic system from collapsing," and he sees the job as "simply to compensate for the inadequacies of free enterprise."

I like the fact that Mr. Hicks takes himself self-consciously as an intellectual. I sympathize, too, with his life-long quest to "belong." Quite a few of us would like to do that. But may it be precisely part of the unavoidable burden of the contemporary intellectual to recognize that there is no comfortable belonging for him within the kind of institutional system that is the United States today? And that the effort to belong as an optimistic all-out collaborator within that system, or any small part of it like Mr. Hicks's little town, inevitably exacts the price Mr. Hicks seems to have paid: one's grateful preoccupation with belonging on one's narrow personal sector blots out awareness of and interest in the larger strategy of the total battle?

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Something Rich and Strange

CROSS SECTION. 1947. Edited by Edwin Seaver. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc. 1947. 510 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

FOR the third time Edwin Seaver has brought out his yearly collection of hitherto unpublished novelettes, short stories, and fragments of novels to be published this year. Flavored with a touch of poetry, the book is a cross-section of the work of over fifty new American writers, though a few of their names are already familiar to the readers of our best fiction. It is also a cross-section of the ideas and the tensions that are evident in American life today, and a promise of a future more creative in literature than has been apparent for the last year or two. It is an ambitious project, for Mr. Seaver has distilled his collection from over seven thousand manuscripts.

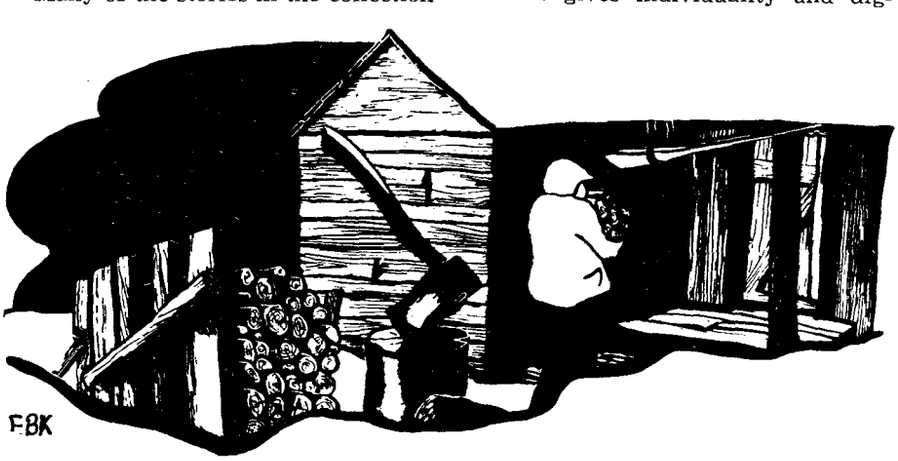
Certainly, it is a more encouraging volume for the critic to survey than several of the collections of short stories that have appeared recently. These writers are not imitative; there is little or no trace of the effective and obsessive mannerisms of older novelists like Hemingway and Steinbeck whose mastery of the terse, hard phrase led a decade of young writers by the nose. Nor are they imitative of ideas or of ways of approaching a theme. There are three stories, for example, which distill brutality and death, Wayne Ellson's "Water Front," Meridel Le Sueur's "O Prairie Girl, Be Lonely," and James Cox's "Homesick for a Hanging," where the scenes range from a cargo boat in New York harbor, a car fleeing from a bank robbery in Ohio to the shack of a Southern cracker. The emotional impact changes from savagery to bleak despair and to the strange mingling of cold-blooded murder and tender love revealed in Miss Le Sueur's memorable and tragic narrative.

Many of the stories in the collection have what used to be called, "social significance." Ann Petry's "In Darkness and Confusion" recites the catastrophe that overwhelms an elderly Negro when his daughter becomes a small-time prostitute and his fat and wholesome wife dies of the impact on a weak heart of racial anger and violence during a riot in Harlem. This story is one of the high points in the book, for Miss Petry manages not only to create of the humblest of men a nobly tragic figure, but also to dramatize the sultry and dark surge of group anger and mob violence. Her tale bears a frightening message.

"The Way Things Are," Sam Elkin's tale of the discovery by a returned soldier of moral values new to him, belongs to this group of stories with a message as does the apocalyptic vision of the ghosts of the victims of the Nazis risen to terrifying life in "Tales from a Vienna Wood," which has been taken from the forthcoming autobiography of Hilde Abel. This fragment from a book is complete in itself, while the two chapters from Leonard Ehrlich's second novel seem unsatisfying, for the selection appears to be both too long and not long enough. There are other stories which are without any other significance than good writing and sound material can offer; they are sufficient in themselves, like William March's robust and entertaining "Ballet of the Bowie Knives," a fine example of bawdy humor which deftly avoids the four-letter word. Betty Bauer's "Confetti Night" is a gay love story in which the bedeviled and unprepossessing daughter of a woman professor manages to get amusingly tight at a youthful party on the floor below and at the same time cheerfully rids herself of her virginity. In "The Lord's Day," by J. F. Powers, a group of sad and aging nuns are shown humbly submitting to the bullying of a mean-hearted priest. In a few pages Mr. Powers gives individuality and dignity to the sisters and conveys the surface barrenness of their lives.

None of these stories resembles the familiar episodic and plotless anecdotes so common to the "little" magazines. Mr. Seaver has found young and new writers who have learned how to create a complete and rounded story that has both a satisfactory beginning and an end. If this is a sign that the hold that fragmentary and fleeting moods, as substitutes for full-bodied stories, have had on young writers is waning, then the art of the short story will gain immeasurably and a young man or woman can hope to enter the magazines that have large circulations and thus escape from the prison of poverty and neglect. It is time for the death of that strange conception that stories with a beginning and an end are somehow unworthy of talented writers, or that the appearance of a story in one of the women's magazines or in the great weeklies marks a writer as a slave to commercialism.

Nevertheless, Mr. Seaver is right in his soundly written preface in viewing with alarm the success and sudden wealth of what he calls "the smart boys in the smart money, the cake and penny writers who want their compromise and their integrity too," the boys, and the girls, too, "who know the value of everything and the price of nothing." He believes that sensationalism and venality, with publishers hoping to make a killing and authors with one eye on the movies and another on the book clubs, are the order of the day. Mr. Seaver mentions Somerset Maugham's sleazy historical novel about Machiavelli as an example of a writer of the first rank who has fallen for the rewards of what he names "servant-girl fiction." As an example of blatant cynicism he excoriates Frederic Wakeman's "The Hucksters," in which the hero's only virtue is that he appears to have a conscience and sincerity about business, though when he falls in love with a woman he is, as far as his emotions go, as shallow as a dishpan. However, there have always been writers and publishers who want to make pots of money fast; and if there is less honesty today about the business of creating artificial tales that become best sellers, it is because the rewards for hitting the jackpot are immeasurably greater than ever before. It is to be hoped that a great many people will read "Cross Section 1947." It is a rewarding book in which you will meet four-square and sometimes tragic men and women and in which there is some hope for a resurrection of American literature out of the dismal swamp in which it seems to have fallen.



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Gothic Allegory of Revenge

THE ANGELIC AVENGERS. By Pierre Andrézel. New York: Random House. 1947. 402 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by ROBERT PICK

LUCAN BELLENDEN, an orphaned girl of much beauty and "sadly situated in life," finds herself faced with an outrageous proposition. The wealthy widower whose blind boy she has for some time been tutoring wants to set her up as his mistress. Immediate flight from his house is the only solution Lucan discerns. For this is the England of the 1840's. Accordingly she takes refuge with Zosine Tabbernor, an attractive friend of boarding-school days who is herself living on the edge of tragedy. For on the night of her birthday ball, with the fête in full swing, her father has managed to escape from the creditors who were closing in on him, leaving his motherless daughter behind with no one to turn to but an embittered old maiden aunt, a likable good-for-nothing cousin, and the Negress Olympia, his own childhood nurse whose shocking voodoo stories, told in the tearful hours after the master's ingenious getaway, remind the two girls again of the "things" that may "happen in life." They are to see some of them with their own eyes.

They decide to stay with each other, and to "throw," as the proud Zosine declares, "the gauntlet to the whole world." They make application for work at an employment office, ultimately with success. The Reverend Mr. Pennhallow and his timid wife are prepared to receive them free of charge—in memory, so it appears, of their own late daughter. For the sake of his health this gentleman, given to higher studies, lives in France, in Languedoc, and there the reader, already engrossed, if not bewitched, by the ever-surprising turns of the story and its paradoxically quiet narrative, soon finds the two maidens well established and "without a care in the world."

The farm building, called Sainte-Barbe, belongs to Joliet, the feudal estate of the Valfond family. The somber memory of a murder committed there in the days of the terror keeps people away from it and its foreign lessee. The latter's boarders get along well enough with him and his wife. True, there is something queer and even frightening about some of their fanatically moralistic talks, as there is about the native housekeeper and a feeble-minded lad who helps in the chores; but these peculiarities do not interfere with the bucolic solitude and the peace of Sainte-Barbe. Only once does a visitor turn up, a fine, widely traveled young Englishman who recently has come into a fortune. Sir Noël calls himself an old pupil of the minister, and as he converses with him—unfolding in the course of his chronicle the highly unusual story of his inheritance — it becomes clear that the sect in which he was ordained embraces people of all kinds, widely scattered throughout the world.

Upon Sir Noël's departure for England, Lucan tries to fight her tender feelings for him, for she assumes that he is in love with Zosine. Zosine, on the other hand, has met Thésée, the heir of Joliet The world of Jane Austen (which inevitably will be re-

ferred to by everyone commenting on this book) appears to be cloudless once more.

But then a dreadful thing happens. Accompanied by a local official, the judge of the county seat calls on Mr. Pennhallow, and accuses him of complicity in a case of white slavery and murder. And while the pious divine succeeds brilliantly in refuting the ghastly charge, not least through the character testimony of the two girls, they themselves in due time discover that "all the old man was accused of by the judge, he has done!"

Lucan's first thought is flight. It is Zosine who resolves to stay on, and fight it out with the malefactors. She has found an old letter, the report of Mr. Pennhallow's Marseille agent on how he has done away with Rosa, one of Sainte-Barbe's former boarders and one of the old villain's victims. Little as Zosine grasps of the horrid and scurrilous contents of the message, she realizes the scope of its turpitude, and the depth of Mr. Pennhallow's nefarious creed. Rosa must be avenged! The world must be freed from the monster!

The rest of the Gothic tale, its manifold cross-plots and thematic ramifications, the girls' hair-raising adventures and the great struggle in Zosine's conscience which retard the happy, Victorian ending of the story —all that really ought to be left to the reader himself to discover. The book is certain to have a large public. It is an eighteenth-century damsel-in-distress novel written in beautiful nineteenth-century language by an author who has come to know the twentieth-century triumph of evil and its bitter fruit among the good. Lust for revenge is the bitterest of all.

First written in Danish by its bilingual author, and published in Copenhagen in 1944 under the title "The Roads of Retribution," the book was acclaimed—in whispers, as need not be said—as an allegory, at once unbelievably subtle and unbelievably audacious. Wasn't Denmark the "show window" of Nazi Europe? Didn't the Danes fare pretty well at the hands of those who killed and defaced and tortured innocent people by the million elsewhere? And hadn't the "Zosines" a duty to perform toward "Rosas"? As it was, the occupying Germans were in no position to dim the popularity of Pierre Andrézel's "old-fashioned horror romance" which to the thoughtful raised these questions.

The American publishers as well as the Book-of-the-Month Club (which is distributing "The Angelic Avengers" to its members) want to retain the anonymity of the author. Actually, it is of no importance who has written the book. With or without the allegory implied, it is a well-nigh perfect novel—as our grandparents understood the term, and our grandchildren are likely to understand it. "Credibility" is a poor yardstick for such rare volumes. The perfect novelist is the person who invents the truth. Nor has perfection any age or fashion.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 187

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 187 *will be found in the next issue.*

NF ZBY RFC ZMHULQ UB

UG GUGQ LZBQB FON FR

NQG NF NFON RFC

RKZNNQCI. —XFTG LFKKUGB.

—JZVUJB ZGM CQRKQLNUFGB.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 186

But, spite of all the criticizing elves,
Those who would make us feel,
must feel themselves.
—"The Rosciad."
CHARLES CHURCHILL.

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Brilliant Scholastic Achievement

LEO TOLSTOY. By Ernest J. Simmons. Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press. 1946. 789 *pp.* $5.

Reviewed by E. C. Ross

A MAGNIFICENT biography. Surely no one can have anything but unflagging admiration for the unflagging talent of the biographer. Only in the last few pages, where the great story comes to the peak—namely, the long deferred flight of Tolstoy from his home—does one become unconscious of the talent with which the story is told and think only of the subject. Not that the talent is intrusive; but that the voyage is so smooth that one cannot help remarking it. But more about the "talent" later. First to the subject, the "genius."

Among thinking people, the feeling about Tolstoy has always been mixed.

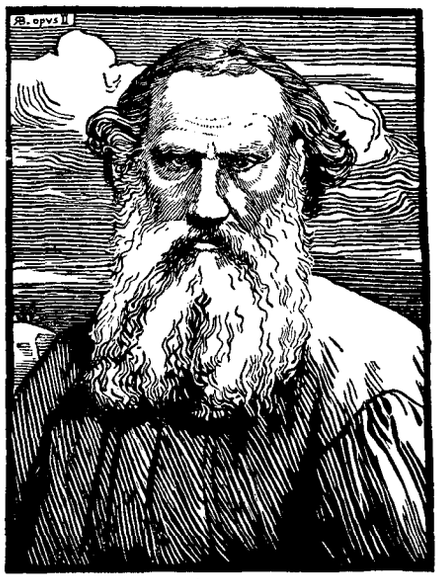
There has been great admiration, but also repulsion. The feeling must always be mixed. There is a reason.

The wide admiration for Tolstoy flows in two directions. First, there is the artist's creative power, immortal in "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenina." Tolstoy's creative power was evident in his first work, "Childhood," 1852. In the fifties, his reputation in Russia was immediate. In the sixties and seventies, it became international with the two novels mentioned above. And it has never diminished. Secondly, there is the moralist's defiance of Russian Czardom and the Russian Church. From the eighties onward, more and more, Tolstoy became known not only as "the great writer of the Russian land," and not only as "the conscience of Russia," but also as "the conscience of the world," "the conscience of humanity." Along with this achievement of the place of prophet, we may include the base upon which the achievement was reared—Tolstoy's supreme moral interest, his striving for moral perfection above all other concerns. Tolstoy became for the later nineteenth century the great type of the seeker after moral perfection despite all obstacles.

But there was repulsion among the discerning. Tolstoy was not perfect. There was something left out. Admiration for art and for moral defiance of a brutish Czardom was modified by repulsion. The trouble was this: Tolstoy renounced something. He did not need this thing to be an artist; he did not need it to be a moral defier; but he did need it to be fully magnificent. Tolstoy renounced the claims of the intellect.

Let us take an example. There are no religious works, nor any irreligious works, so calculated to implant aversion to the pseudo-Christian world as the religious works of Tolstoy. It makes no difference whether Christ's rules of behavior were too idealistic or not; the fact is that several hundred million people believe that Christ was divine, and pray to him, yet pay no attention to Christ's rules of behavior. The pseudo-Christians believe that Christ was divine and yet pay no attention to what he said! One cannot conceive of a more ironical, even ludicrous, impasse in the history of mind; and Tolstoy made much of it—burned it into the mind of the later nineteenth century as it had never been burned in before in the history of Christianity. To worship Christ and yet flout his precepts! But Tolstoy, though he did not believe in the divinity of Christ, did believe in God, and toward the end entertained some conception of immortality. In short, and fundamentally, he himself trafficked in the supernatural the same as the metaphysicians and theologians whom he despised. Such mental slithering about does not go down with thinking men.

Again, Tolstoy, having Christ for his master, preached simply a juristic system of morality. Practise the virtues! Be good! Follow these rules! He either would or could not comprehend the fact that if we are to be good we shall first have to construct a world, economically and socially, in which we *can* be good. Tolstoy—except sometimes and temporarily as a compromise—was against economic and social reform. Only in moral reform, according to the laws of Christ, lay the salvation of the world. There was in Tolstoy a stubborn, muzhik-like resistance to knowledge and the claims of the intellect based upon knowledge. If the good life, according to Bertrand Russell, is "inspired by love and guided by knowledge," then, according to Tolstoy, the good life is inspired by love and *not* guided by knowledge.



—Woodcut by Robert Bryden.

"After confessing his sin, Tolstoy sins again, and sins and confesses ad infinitum."

And, one may add, and for the very reason that Tolstoy resisted knowledge and the light of the intellect, his inner life, as well as the outer, was a ceaseless and smoky battleground. He was the great type of the man who, instead of educating his impulses, says "no" to them, tries to prohibit them. But the impulses, of course, were never scared by his exorcisms, and hung right outside the door ready to fly in and plague him. One of them was always there—his sensuality. Now much "no" (with no education) produces much "yes" in practice. And then with much "yes" there must be, with a grandly honest man like Tolstoy, much confession of sin. And there is nothing so intolerable in Tolstoy as those everlasting, multitudinous confessions. Honesty is a virtue; but when, immediately after confessing his sin, Tolstoy sins again, and sins and confesses ad infinitum, one gets tired of this virtue and takes it as a senseless ritual of the sort Tolstoy detested in the church. The patter and pelting of confession throughout Tolstoy's life is offensive.

This biography is a major work of American literary scholarship—something fairly rare, and rarer still when it comes, as this work does, from the academic realm. Academic literary scholarship in America is devoted to trivia—that twentieth-century mountain of trivia which dwarfs the dunciad of the centuries. Of course, commercialized university administration is responsible, demanding that professors publish for position and promotion. But trivia are trivia. And, as a rule, the professors shower us with trivia not even American but trivia about the most minor leavings of British literature long ago.

It took a tremendous amount of labor to write this biography—to go through the tonnage of Tolstoyana. It took a tremendous amount of patience—to put in order the many thousands of details. But, above all, the excellence of the work consists in the never-flagging energy, almost sprightliness, with which the vast story is told. Though the book is a tower of ten thousand details, the details never seem to be details, but all ring important. Now to make no detail seem like one, and never to get a detail out of order, is the way to write a biography. The result in the case of Tolstoy is to bring him to life.

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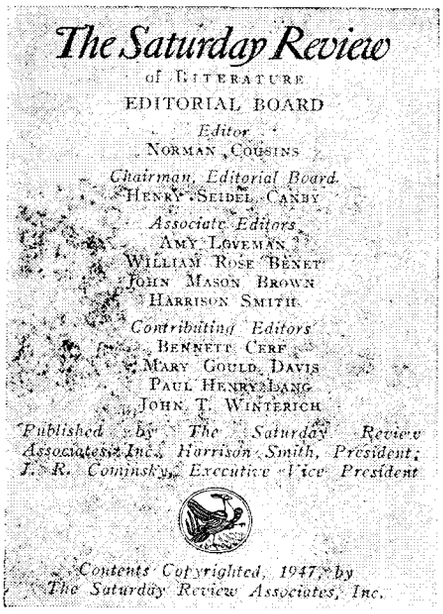

WOMAN, THE SCAPEGOAT

THIRTY years ago a long line of women marched under the new plaster arch at New York's Washington Square and up Fifth Avenue. Blue and gold ribbons crossed their chests; a sprinkling of self-conscious men stalked along, prepared to dodge bricks and catcalls. This was the great feminist parade, the culmination of a generation of protest for women's rights and for the vote, and in 1920 the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution was passed. From that day until recently there has been no systematic attempt to find reasons for checking the advance of American women into every activity and into almost every profession, and few attempts to discredit her as a woman, a worker, a wife, or a mother.

Today it is a different story, for there is a full-fledged attack on women proceeding in books and magazines that would have been almost inconceivable ten years ago. The feminist cause, which had for its aim the liberation of women from masculine domination, equal economic rights, equal opportunities for jobs, equal pay, and equal legal status, is now being challenged everywhere. A young woman who in the depression had to work to contribute to the family income, who later toiled in the munition factories and in offices through the war may now rightly feel that men want to send her back to the apartment and the kitchen stove. The American mother, sacred in song and in sentimental story, is under fire. She is blamed because two million young American men were for psychiatric reasons unsuitable for the army. Philip Wylie invented a name for it, "momism," and considers it the deadliest disease of the nation, the Oedipus complex on a vast scale. Mr. Wylie, in an article that appeared in *Cosmopolitan* and later in *The Reader's Digest* summed up the case against women as wives and divorce hunters and laid the blame on the romantic ideal on which they are nourished in the movies and popular fiction.

In *Collier's* a few weeks ago Dr. Ralph Banay, Director of Research in Social Deviation at Columbia University, takes out his shotgun and lets go with both barrels, leaving the American woman without a leg to stand on. He says, in all sincerity, that woman's progress toward emancipation is dangerous, that her emotional development lags behind her social and economic progress, that her "total nature" is pre-adolescent, that her sexual ideas belong to the Stone Age, that she is restless because she will not accept her physical destiny. He adds that her conduct is increasingly aggressive and uncontrolled, that she has a split personality, and what he calls a large reservoir of latent criminal tendencies. To prove this alarming statement he says that in 1941 crime among women increased four times over the increase attributed to men. David L. Cohn, in his sardonic manner, has added to this horrifying picture in an article in *The Atlantic* and in *The Reader's Digest*. To him our women appear to be avaricious, stupid, and inadequate. In October, *The Saturday Evening Post* offered to its millions of readers an article by Dr. Edward A. Strecker, another onslaught on the American mother, backed up by case histories. Early this month there was published the most comprehensive and damning contribution to the recent literature on what is wrong with the modern American woman. It is the work of Dr. Marynia F. Farnham, a successful New York psychiatrist, in collaboration with Ferdinand Lundberg, who will be remembered for his "America's Sixty Families" and "Imperial Hearst." Together they track down the roots of woman's neuroticism and condemn the entire conception of feminism as an aberration dangerous to society and fatal to women. In their opinion, the case for women seems hopeless, for the home is no longer a haven since man's mechanical and commercial ingenuity has equipped the kitchen and living room with mechanical devices that have increased women's technological unemployment. They infer that women would be happier if they stoked the kitchen fire with coal, tended the old furnace, and scrubbed floors on their hands and knees, going early to bed, exhausted, but without a complex in their anatomy. As an answer to this dismal view of woman's future they believe that women should obtain status and prestige through motherhood, that they should repossess their homes, and that somehow a cultural revolution must arrive to alter the values by which we all live. This book is written without a trace of the flippancy that marks a good deal of this new anti-female writing. It is sincere, convincing, but in the end it serves the same purpose; it damns the American woman of today and condemns the ideal of feminism root and branch, the crusade that began with Mary Wollstonecraft's ardent and revolutionary book "Vindication of the Rights of Women," a century and a half ago, continued through the eloquence and labors of a legion of self-sacrificing women, and seemed to have won its final victory in 1920.

The manner in which women are presented in modern fiction is an oblique reflection of this anarchic tendency, the innumerable matriarchs who have fed on the adoration of helpless families, the cold and vicious heroines of popular novels, or the yielding but tenacious female devils our novelists have created, so that it has become a current phrase that men can be in love with the American woman, but they are incapable of liking them. The roots for this antagonism go back further than this brief account of its violent manifestation today. There may be practical reasons for it without consulting the psychiatrist, the popular writer, or the student of the deviations of mankind's behavior. It is possible that women have indeed gone ahead too far and too fast to suit our conventional economic structure. It is possible that men do not like the spectacle of women workers by the millions with equal pay for equal work, or perhaps, still less, women willing to accept less pay for the same work, and that they want the new outposts women have won in the laboring world during the war taken away from them. But women have memories as long as men, and they recall the long depression of the thirties when wives and mothers who had lost their ability to work for pay were unable to save their homes. It is conceivable, too, that women's ownership, if not control, of two-thirds of all inherited wealth has something to do with this anti-feminist wave. Suppose, a man might say, they hire their own lawyers and bankers and take control. Perhaps, in conclusion, we are trying to find a scapegoat for the failure of marriage, the awesome tide of divorce and annulment, and there woman stands, the obvious center of all of man's emotional disturbances.

H. S.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Momism

SIR: To what must amount to an anguished howl of protest on the one hand, and to the smiles of affirmation to the analysis submitted by James Hilton on the other, let me add something of gratefulness to Mr. Wylie for revealing what goes on in the mind of an "intellectual" (*SRL* December 7). One who has a great many answers to a great many things but isn't too sure where they ought to go. He reminds me of the predicament I face when I go to pick out a necktie—I'm in an area where I have to be what I'm not, a connoisseur. Mr. Wylie demonstrates an ineptness in the recognition of true values. *And,* he's mad to the point of distraction.

What amounted to a normal amount of resistance to *his* Mom, plus a desperate search for something to write about, brother Wylie has revealed an abnormal bent to the unwholesome. Like Jackson, *et al,* who see stories in man's futile efforts to be a man, he has seized upon a facet of personality heretofore deemed one of the sacred. By distorting a sensitive spot in any man's mind, and then by marshaling all the ills of the race, he idiotically assumes to have discovered the basic difficulty. A-rotten-thing-to-do pays off good dividends these days, as Bennett Cerf reminds us, and creating a stockpile of carrion for the mildly insane is hardly the way to combat the evil, real or pretended.

The alcoholic determines to take the fatal drink, the criminal plans the outrage deliberately, the sex major doses himself well on pictures and postures, and Mr. Wylie wrote in "high glee."

I'm sure *The Saturday Review* let this go by in kindly indulgence, as they probably should. But my goodness, isn't it well to state in advance that all the contestants ought to abide by Marquis of Queensbury rules, or Roberts's Rules of Order, or moral dignity, or something? Our slip is showing, our hat's over one eye, and our hairdo a mess when we allow ourselves to indulge in such rancid slanderings in the name of objectivity and permissible criticism. Like many another pseudo-intellectual, Mr. Wylie allows himself to prate about "principles" that when applied to normal social relations become abstruse. He mentions six functions of the home, four of which might be applied to any hard-boiled concept of personality. The last two could fit into the same category. He bases his abuse on the questionable technique of Nietzsche, at the same time concluding that he is concerned about democracy. Still confused about the meaning of maturity, he infers that Wylie could give advice on what to do in the Atomic Age.

It is apparent that he lacks a thread of meaning that could integrate his well-trained mind, a faith that would point out some of the glaring errors he so unconsciously brags about. In his condition he's like a drunk at the wheel of an automobile. By luck he may make it, but by averages he is most likely to crash.

WILLIAM HARRISON MYERS.
Pasadena, Calif.

THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH

"I know it tastes funny but think how you'll be able to tax it."

SIR: Philip Wylie's latest diatribe about Momism is welcome since it frankly implies that men have relinquished their duties as fathers. Three million young men who flunked army service apparently had no fathers. Mom had to rear them all alone. She kept her sons tied to her limited figleaf while Adam was out gathering bigger and better figleaves to hide his lack of responsibility in their rearing.

Man's advertisements, fiction, movies, and pictorial magazines plainly depict him engaged in laying the only foundation of his house of life under the bed. His chief concern is that there is a pretty face and nice curves in that bed. He doesn't consider it necessary that there be an underpinning of character and intelligence under the rest of the house. Of course the house tumbles down. Mom is to blame. He fails to recognize that he had been to blame in not giving his sons a mother who was herself adult. He had known such girls, but their noses didn't quite please him. He even knew girls with both brains and beauty. But he doesn't like brains in women. On the contrary. A pretty face and shapely legs are all a young man desires in the girl he leads to the altar. He asks no firmer foundation on which to build his life than his own unstable emotions.

We shall continue to have grownup adolescents until young men and women are taught a sense of racial responsibility. They will not have it so long as they continue to be conceived of *Esquire,* suckled on cheesecake, and nurtured in the movies. To our national dish of cheesecake something more must be added: self-discipline, awareness of life's psychical riches, knowledge of the values that endure—and man's recognition of his duties as a father.

But Philip Wylie playing the role of Adam—the woman thou gavest me! We have lots of figtrees in Arizona, Philip. Shall I send you one?

ESTELLE AUBREY BROWN.
Tucson, Ariz.

SIR: I wonder if you'll print a rebuttal of Mr. Philip Wylie's "More Musings on Mom" from one who contrived to remain in the army thirty-nine months without being discharged as neurotic, and who yet takes exception to Mr. Wylie's review or article. It's usually difficult to distinguish whether Mr. Wylie's primary purpose is to comment on another author's book or to publicize his own and air his provocative but rather superficial psychological, philosophical, and sociological notions. He insults the intelligence of a large number of anonymous victims of military conscription, not alone that of a writer presumed capable of self-defense.

There are strains of truth in any thesis conceived by an educated and reasoning mind, as there's truth beneath Mr. Wylie's entertaining treatment of well-known basic psychology in terms of "Momism." The fundamental flaw—comparable to making "Mom" a scapegoat for the neuroses of mankind—is in lumping together nearly three million conscriptees under that vague label "psychoneurotic." Society is much more complicated, Mr. Wylie—and problems are vastly more difficult of solution than merely to say that a large percentage of "psychos" were exposed to unwholesome mother-influences and that we'd therefore better probe the depths of this quagmire of mother-love in its uncovered lustfulness and prod forth the giant Maturity who is to save us from atomic bombs and civilization's cataclysmic destruction.

JAMES BOYER MAY.
Hollywood, Calif.

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Seeing Things

WATCH ON THE RHINE

MOST plays being about nothing, it is a relief to see even a bad play about something. If the theme made the play as surely as tailors agree that apparel proclaims the man, the interest with which we sit before "Temper the Wind"* would equal the relief.

Very decidedly, Edward Mabley's and Leonard Mins's melodrama *is* about something. Its concern is what we are doing, and what we should be doing, in the Germany we have conquered. Few scripts could deal with a subject more urgent in its timeliness or more important to the years to come. For Germany, the old, the habitual offender, figures largely in our hopes for peace. Her future will either justify our victory or squander it.

If Germany continued to represent a war problem, if she were still an aggressor to be conquered instead of a conquered country to be governed, she would in many ways present a lesser problem than she does today. For, as history proves on page after page, men and nations that can rise triumphantly to meet the challenges of battle can fail utterly to recognize or solve the graver challenges of peace.

Wars are not fought to win battles. Battles are fought to win wars. And wars are waged, in theory at least, for reasons which are anything but military. The victory by arms is not their end. It is merely the means to an end which should be a beginning. Most people forget this. They are human enough to believe not only that wars stop with the surrender but that our responsibilities end there too. Even our government's vocabulary when returning men to civilian life suggests this. These once-needed men are sent to "separation centers." They go on "terminal leaves." And supposedly are "released" or "discharged" so far as patriotic service is concerned.

To bomb a town out of existence so as to hasten the end of a war is one thing. To govern in the rubble of that ruined town so as to build a permanent peace which will vindicate this bombing is quite another. Of the two, the bombing is the simpler. It is the simpler because it requires bravery where governing demands wisdom. And wisdom is harder to come by than courage.

Multiply that one bombed town by a hundred; imagine a whole nation dazed, sullen, and paralyzed in the physical and moral poverty of defeat; cut off that nation as if by tourniquet into zones governed quite differently by erstwhile allies who, at the moment of peace, have become divided among themselves in their aims and hopes; realize that the old offenders need to be policed as surely as prisoners must be guarded or patients nursed; consider the special maiming of the mind that the Nazis made it their business to bring about; grant that despair, anger, hunger, and frustration are ideal fertilizers for the seeds of future wars; and, more serious than all, think of the indifference or fatigue which can overtake Minute Men when the crisis has lost its drama, and those terrible but vibrant minutes have stretched into hours and years of dull routine, and all of us are reminded of how enormous is the problem with which Germany confronts the Allied world today.

During the war people felt the nobility of being a part of something larger than themselves. (As if they are not still! Yes, and now part of a world nobler than it was when it had to be mobilized only to destroy!) The dullest minds could respond to the excitements of a universe living under the threat of death. Its threats are always simpler to understand than the possibilities of living. There were no grays in the picture. Indeed, never had black been blacker or white whiter than they were in the choices with which the years of conflict confronted us. Because war, and this is doubtless one of the sad reasons for its age-old popularity, had once again made absence of thought mandatory except on the paramount issue of survival.

The moment the guns were silent, however, the canvas was inundated by disquieting grays. Men in uniform, when no longer fighting, could not understand why they should remain in uniform and overseas. Even when facing battle, the abiding causes for their being there had never been sufficiently explained to them. If they did understand what peace no less than war demanded of them, often their families did not.

—*Vandamm Studio.*

"One of the troubles with 'Temper the Wind' is that [the leading man] remains as static as if dunked in fixative."

THOUGH the emergency continued, it was saluted as a recess. Where armaments and daring had played their determining parts, plans, policies, and patience had to replace them. Men were as divided as their governments. Discipline evaporated. The enemy was not to be shot at. He was to be lived with. The objective ceased to be tonight's target or tomorrow's encounter. It became the kind of peace so thought out, supervised, and policed that targets would be unnecessary.

Some said "Build Germany up." Others said "Keep her down." Everyone agreed that she should be de-Nazified. By hard means? By soft? That was the question. And how—especially when, as a Christmas present, 800,000 acknowledged Nazis were granted a full amnesty. There were those who argued that the new Reich should be self-sustaining. Others, with long memories, wanted to treat her as an aggressor state. They hoped to see her so totally disarmed that kites and model aircraft could not be flown within her borders.

Business men contended that German business must be rebuilt. Lawyers, who are apt to believe that nothing can be until it has been, quibbled about the Nuremberg trials because no previous trials of the same kind had been held at Nuremberg or anywhere else. Plain people, glad to dodge the problem in the deceptive security of this country, frowned on the taxes made inevitable by an occupying army. They wanted their

* *TEMPER THE WIND, by Edward Mabley and Leonard Mins. Staged by Reginald Denham. Settings by Raymond Sovey. Presented by Barnard Straus and Roland Haas. With a cast including Blanche Yurka, Charlotte London, Vilma Kurer, Reinhold Schunzel, Walter Greaza, Tonio Selwart, and Thomas Beck. At the Playhouse.*

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cake, which was peace, but they wanted to eat more too, regardless of what the rest of the world ate, which is where reduced taxes would have come in.

A few isolationists, victims always of amnesia and blindness, continued to think as their forefathers had thought under Rutherford B. Hayes. They refused to face either the post-war and atomic world, or America's part in it. They grumbled that we were dissipating our energies on the United Nations. One of them went so far recently as to urge us in print to go back to our Constitutional duty of forming here at home "a more perfect union," and apparently let the rest of the world go hang.

All of these dilemmas lie behind "Temper the Wind." Familiar as they are to any newspaper reader, they gain a certain novelty and a sudden concreteness when personalized on the stage. Yet they lose more than they gain. They do this not only because the melodramatic statement of them by the Messrs. Mabley and Mins is slow and inept, but also because the theatre itself can be stubbornly resistant to ideas.

The solitary mind has always been more receptive than is the aggregate mind. What has long been accepted by the single reader can startle a host of readers transformed into that new entity known as an audience. Our courage seems to sink, even as our prudishness rises, in a crowd. Words which would cause no blushes or surprise if uttered before a twosome become increasingly offensive as their hearers multiply. Why this should be so, except that individuals cease in many ways to be individuals when they have become part of a mob, no psychologists have been able to explain.

A MELODRAMA such as "Temper the Wind" does not suffer because it is based on a thoroughly publicized situation. The fact that this situation is already known to every playgoer, and remembered by him, however dimly, should help. For in the theatre familiarity can breed content. "Temper the Wind" suffers because the points it makes must also struggle against the medium in which they are being stated. And at meeting the demands of this medium the Messrs. Mabley and Mins prove far more earnest than adept.

The impediment of the theatre's intellectual speech is born of its emotional needs. The theatre's first duty is not to think. It is to feel, and to state its feelings contagiously enough so that they create the equivalent of thought. The stage is bound to spend (though this does not mean waste) a

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great deal of time when it seeks to turn a good editorial into an equally effective play. Opposing policies have to be reduced to opposing characters. These characters must be established as individuals no less than as sandwichmen for points of view. Meanwhile the feeling of a household or a place must be projected, and a specific plot fabricated and set in motion.

The purpose of dramatic editorializing is to ignite facts. This is what "Temper the Wind" fails to do. It has its good, stinging, single lines, such as the toast offered by an American soldier in Germany when he drinks "To the optimists who landed in Normandy." In the uncompromising older German aristocrat, so admirably played by Blanche Yurka, it has a fully rounded character, too. Its Bavarian interior as designed by Raymond Sovey is wonderfully, hence terribly, *Deutsch*. It can also claim its moments when the action casts off its lethargy. But for the most part the evening resembles a poorly laid fire, made of twigs instead of logs and unworthy of its grate, to which someone has forgotten to apply a match.

It relates the efforts of a young American lieutenant colonel to solve the problems of military government in a Bavarian town. He has known the German family controlling the town from pre-Hitlerian days. The head of this household is an unscrupulous industrialist whose principal capacity seems to lie in changing sides at will. As if this Krupp-like figure, his Nazi son-in-law, and the town itself were not enough for the young colonel to contend with, he must also fight against an appeasing American business man who is cartel-minded.

Because the colonel is good and human and believes in democracy, there are those who have hailed him as another Major Joppolo. Calling him Major Joppolo, however, seems to me to be reaching for an easy stencil rather than actually describing him. Joppolo grew in Mr. Hersey's pages, and grew as Mr. March played him. But Colonel Woodruff does not grow either as acted by Thomas Beck or as written. One of the many troubles with the play is that he remains as static throughout as if he had been dunked in fixative. The production, so excellent in the case of Miss Yurka's aristocrat, includes two pivotal performances as hopelessly miscast as Walter Greaza's American business man and as sadly overdrawn as Reinhold Schunzel's German industrialist.

Faults and all, "Temper the Wind" has this much to its credit. It *is*, as I have tried to point out, about something. And that, though it may not be enough, is something, too.

JOHN MASON BROWN.

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Behind the Footlights

KELLER'S CONTINENTAL REVUE. By Winifred Bambrick. Decorations by John V. Morris. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1946. 462 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by JOSEPH WECHSBERG

QUITE a few people in this country are making a comfortable living by commenting on the minor antics and major intrigues of Broadway and Hollywood. Backstage gossip has always fascinated the suckers sitting out front who seem to be interested more in the goings-on behind the stage than on it. Miss Bambrick, a conscientious chronicler behind the scenes of Herr Keller's Continental Revue, has come up with an exact account of backstage life, throwing in a generous dosage of nostalgia, glazing the whole thing with the glitter of vaudeville. The result is a pleasant, at times delightful story of the wanderings of the great revue from London to Berlin, Munich, Leipzig, and other European cities, in the late thirties. According to the dust jacket, Miss Bambrick, a former concert harpist, veteran of Carnegie Hall and NBC broadcasts, joined the Continental Revue and trouped around for three years until the war caught up with her and she returned to her native Canada. One can assume that this so-called "novel" is richly embroidered with autobiographical brocade.

It must have been quite a life. Herr Direktor Keller's Continental Revue was "the biggest in all Europe, biggest in the world." The program reads like the cast of a Walt Disney extravaganza and has more characters than the United Nations Assembly. Bavarian managers, Russian music directors, Irish animal trainers, Tyrolean ballerinas; Mario, the slick Italian comedian; Madame Rastella, who went from opera to opera burlesque; English tumblers, German rope-throwers, a Chinese hair-swinging act, a Yogi contortionist, a Persian dancer, Hawaiian guitarists, Russian dagger dancers. The Strong Man was a German (no symbolism intended) and the midgets came from the Free State of Danzig. There were seventy-two pretty girls in the chorus, all on a high moral plane, and assorted Arabians and Cossacks and Borzoi hounds and Nazi wrestlers and monkeys and leopards.

Supreme master of this colorful assembly was Herr Keller, a grandiose impresario in the great Continental manner who wore Bond Street clothes, a monocle, spoke twelve languages fluently, and would give Mr. Hurok an inferiority complex. Mr. Keller fell in and out of love with his leading ladies, and seemed to have a way with nude gypsy dancers and with Nazi generals.

The exceedingly slim thread of plot concerns a pale, virginal English artist who is being driven between Kathi, the lovely, fairy-like Tyrolean ballerina, and sinister, villainous Tania, a more intriguing, more scheming gypsy than Carmen. But somehow the protagonists never step out of the electricians' technicolor spotlights into the reality of daylight, and the off-stage lives of those interesting people never seem as fascinating as their professional activities. Miss Bambrick has given an accurate, well-observed, and always entertaining account of what goes on backstage of a big revue, from rehearsal to the final curtain on opening night, and she has understanding for the ambitions, jealousies, and little joys and pains of her three-hundred performers. Like many other things, Herr Keller's Continental Revue was sadly broken up by Herr Hitler's Continental Revue. One comes to the reluctant conclusion that the French were right when they said, *Ce n'est pas gai, la vie d'artiste.*

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THE ORIGINAL SIN

CONTEMPLATING, in this Holy Season, as this is being written, the general flavor of licenses and franchises given out to broadcasters, I sense a pervading odor of the doctrine of original sin about the industry, to which both the Federal Communications Commission and the industry appear to subscribe.

It was first advanced in the early twenties, when radio was invented. The then Congress, hurriedly having to organize a set of standards by which one of several applicants for the same frequency could be chosen, cast about for reliable yard-sticks, and finding no precedent for the misty business of sending words and music through the air, had to invent their own measurements for fitness to engage in this commerce.

Financial responsibility, personal integrity as attested by absence of complaint, the applicant's standing in his community, plus a relatively sense-making plan for programs seemed to be the critical factors, and to this day they are adhered to.

However, all of these factors, important as they are, left one matter unmentioned. That last question, the most crucial, was the matter of intent. It was more or less felt that some stewardship should be set over an applicant's attitude and aims. Did he hope to enter the radio business for the purpose of doing a little good to a lot of people, a lot of good to a few people, or only to benefit himself?

It is the question that everybody has concerning every other individual in the world. What's he up to?

Naturally, one cannot set measurements of accomplishment in the vague half-world of intentions. What the first commissioners finally did, as a gesture to the weird demons that inhabit this shadow-world of intentions, was establish the doctrine that the air-waves can never belong to any one person or corporation. In the present-day terminology of the Federal Communications Commission, and I quote Mr. Commissioner Durr speaking at a recent Town Hall debate, the idea is that radio is not just another breed of private enterprise, but that broadcasters are trustees for property belonging to the people of the United States.

A secondary, though more specific, thesis of this dogma has recently been advanced by the commission in connection with the proposed sales of radio stations. "Thou Shalt Not Traffic in Licenses" is the way it would go if the commission thought it could get away with a Biblical tone to its briefs.

It simply means that the commission feels that it is somehow indicative of evil intent for a license-holder to offer to sell his franchise and properties at a higher price than the bare cost of the physical plant. It studiously ignores the effort that the creation, through good programming, of good will requires, and suspects any increase in value as inhering in the franchise itself, which, according to the dogma, is like The Body of Christ, to be partaken of endlessly, but never exclusively. The entire relationship between broadcasters and the public and between broadcasters and the commission is cluttered with semantic and ritualistic similarities to a wealthy and formal religion based on a feeling of guilt.

Had the broadcasters denied the stigma of this sin, they might have made an interesting case on the following grounds—that the air is no more sacred than the ground, and that a franchise to convey words through the air is by no means different from a franchise to convey cabbages over the highways, or by rail. In those instances, the same problems of private use of and profit from public heritage obtain. And yet it is not only permitted, it is encouraged, that corporations shall profit by the increased value of the franchises they develop in the field of public utilities and interstate trade. Railroad companies are bought and sold with the blessings of a democracy-loving government, provided only that bankruptcy proceedings are not used to shelter schemers. Street-railway franchises can be marketed, steamship lines privately owned and financially enjoyed, and airlines are notoriously active in investment markets where the only end is the increase in value through operation of the privilege.

IT IS a point of view that was never clearly tested in the early days when the ritual was being first distilled in the baffled minds of the men originally confronted with this intriguing new invention. It is too late now, perhaps, for a broadcaster to claim attention for that point of view in the courts, for unspoken laws are impossible of countervention—they are too

"I wish you doctors would write these prescriptions in Latin so a guy could tell what he's taking."

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formless, they are shapeless, and have no discernible limits.

And in addition, the broadcasters early accepted the fact that they were guilty of some obscure taint, and should be required to prove themselves innocent at regular intervals. That acceptance served them in place of a conscience, and the past quarter century of broadcasting is merely the history of radio operators, network managements, and independent station owners wondering, not how good they can get to be, but, rather, how bad they dare be.

They indicated, from the very start, that they would not attempt to take responsibility for the quality of the output of their stations, an absolute necessity if ever they were to test the validity of the first, vague formulations of national policy. They blithely turned over to advertisers and advertising agencies the program aspect of their operation. It was a candid admission that they expected to be put out of business at any time, for they made no effort to invest in writers, performers, and the type of long-range thinking necessary to create out of the rough clay of radio a powerful and wise entertainment industry.

Radio is not, today, any of the things it was born to be. It is not operated in the public interest. It is operated in the specific interest of a handful of patent medicine makers, soap chemists, and tobacco curers. It is only an educational, political, and social force after the salesmen have enjoyed their sport. Somebody has to fill up the remaining time, the hours when nobody is supposed to be listening, and it might as well be news and a public service at that time, particularly when such fare costs little or nothing to prepare.

Everybody knows the intent of a manufacturer. It is to sell as much of his product as he can. And the turning over of a selected thirty minutes of broadcast time to a manufacturer and his agent is surely a clear clue as to the broadcaster's intention. It is to make as much money as possible.

Proprietors of older media of mass communications, the more sober business men and thinkers in the field of journalism, long ago consigned to the ash-heap the advertising throw-away. The editors and the publishers get out their papers without the help, advice, or direction of the advertisers, and even edit the advertising copy on occasion. It is traditional that the good magazines and the good newspapers, those that have survived the test of readership decade after decade, abhor even the vaguest suggestion as to the news content or feature makeup from advertisers and their agents.

Radio can rearrange its position, even at this late date, if the broadcasters care to make the effort. Nothing is ever static, although at the time of a projected change the policy of precedent seems as unalterable as scientific law. The networks, the stations, in concert, or even singly, can take back from the advertisers the duties and privileges of broadcasting. They can decide, in the light of their broader experience, demagnetized of allegiance to a particular brand of soap, what the public interest and necessity really is, and they can become experts in radio, instead of advertising specialists, relegating the sale of products to the same importance that it has in journalism—the back of the book.

And then, when the people of the United States rather than the board of directors of a patent medicine company are recognized as the true audience, radio can, perhaps, take its rightful place as a private enterprise, to whom the regulatory commissions have protective and constructive, as well as punitive, relationships.

Albert N. Williams

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. "Gargantua," by Rabelais. 2. "Tristram Shandy," by Laurence Sterne. 3. O-lan, in "The Good Earth," by Pearl Buck. 4. Melanie Wilkes, in "Gone with the Wind," by Margaret Mitchell. 5. "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," by Thomas Hardy. 6. Rosasharn Rivers, in "The Grapes of Wrath," by John Steinbeck. 7. Hetty Sorrel, in "Adam Bede," by George Eliot. 8. Susie, in "Boy Meets Girl," by Bella and Samuel Spewack. 9. "Scarlet Sister Mary," by Julia Peterkin. 10. Amy Dorrit, in "Little Dorrit," by Charles Dickens.

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The New Recordings

COMPOSITION, PERFORMER, ALBUM, NUMBER, NUMBER OF RECORDS	ENGINEERING: *Recording Technique*	ENGINEERING: *Surface*	REMARKS
KHACHATURIAN, PIANO CONCERTO. Moura Lympany; London Philh. Anatole Fistoulari. English Decca: EDA #3 (4) $9	Fully high fidelity, as *claimed;* somewhat greater range than best U. S. shellac. *But if played to bring out full range,* they are too scratchy!	A	A paradox—few listeners can hear extended range on these, and none without noisiness, too. But they are worth trying for other reasons. The K. concerto is brilliant, hardly great. Petrouchka brilliantly recorded, big, but somewhat logy in Ansermet reading.
STRAVINSKY, PETROUCHKA SUITE. London Philharmonic, Ansermet. English Decca: EDA #2 (5) $11	(*Below*) They sound fine on most machines, tho minus highest range—typical "live" empty - hall European recording.	A	
BRAHMS, SYMPHONY #3. Phila. Orch. Ormandy. Columbia M 642 (4) $4.85	High fidelity and somewhat dead hall make this sometimes uncomfortably clear. Surfaces very poor.	B	Columbia replaces its Brahms 3rd; here are the old and new. Musically similar, but I like Stock somewhat better. The old recording has better string playing, better ensemble.
Comparison: Chicago Symphony, Stock. Columbia M 443 (4) $4.85	Far less brilliant in highs, less detail, but still a fine orchestral sound.	A—	
PAGANINI RECITAL. Ruggiero Ricci, violin. VOX 614 (3) $3.85	Recorded very "dead," with violin close to mike, hence decidedly lacking in brilliance. But technical details clearly audible.	B+	A good "violinist's handbook" of technical tricks, but not much to listen to. Aspiring players will want it.

HIGH FIDELITY RECORDS

THOUGH very few phonographs can yet give high fidelity performance, three companies now bravely (and truthfully) advertise their records as high fidelity. Two, Pilotone and Concert Hall, use vinylite; the third, the English Decca Company, shellac type material.

As has been said before, our own shellac records have a wider range of sound frequencies on them now than before the war. The London Deccas, so-called, are even better. As far as I can tell they have a somewhat wider range than the best of ours. The music on them is brilliant and certainly to be rated as high fidelity.

The following points may point up the still confusing situation in respect to high fidelity on plastic and vinylite. 1) Very few people now can hear the full range of any of the newer records on their machines, Decca included. 2) It is clear that shellac records can offer a really wide tonal range; but no shellac-type record to my knowledge can be played really high fidelity without a startling amount of surface hiss, Decca included. Filter out the noise—you lose the high tones of the music. Whatever the ads may imply it cannot be otherwise! 3) It is, however, not hard at all mentally to "tune out" the smooth background hiss of these newer shellac records, as played high fidelity. Many record fans, among them myself, have acquired the valuable habit, with consequently great satisfaction in the music. 4) This noisiness in shellac increases enormously as the range of the phonograph increases, since most of the noise is in the highest range of sound. But the noises heard on vinylite—ticks, crackles, bumps—are about the same, high fidelity or not. Hence the higher the fidelity of your phonograph the worse will be shellac's showing, relatively. Vinylite is, ideally, superior for full-range playing. 5) *But* though vinylite may be quieter over-all, its noises, being irregular, sharp, often rhythmical, are much more difficult to ignore than the loud, smooth hiss of shellac. And vinylite these days is still annoyingly uneven in quality. Very little of it is perfect.

If this has left you gasping in worse confusion than ever—try a London Decca for yourself; compare it with one of the vinylite records. If you have a standard machine the whole question is for the time being academic, and the Deccas are thoroughly enjoyable even without the highest highs!

EDWARD TATNALL CANBY.

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NEW EDITIONS

GIBBON'S prose has long been noted for its evocative powers, but readers who are lucky enough to acquire the newest edition of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" will find themselves enjoying dual series of images, for in these three handsome Heritage Press volumes ($17.50) the historian's art is complemented by reproductions of almost fifty of Piranesi's famous etchings. They picture, of course, the Rome which Gibbon visited in 1764-65, rather than the ancient city of which he wrote; but these views, done by a brooding romanticist with a firm architectural line, of the eighteenth-century ruins which still bore witness to "the triumph of barbarism and religion," are hugely interesting, impressive illustrations for the long narrative in which Gibbon stated his great thesis.

The edition is J. B. Bury's, with the introduction in which he discussed the History in the light of modern scholarship. Much of this discussion, studded with references to such gentlemen as Krumbacher, Uspenski, Haury, and Salzenberg, will mean little to the reader who lacks special information, but it will serve at least to warn him that if he intends to read Gibbon for history's sake, he will do well to have a few good reference works of recent date at his elbow. Indeed, there is quite a lot of loose talk about reading Gibbon for history's sake. It is no casual jaunt, but a job that requires considerable knowledge, patience, and steady concentration if it is to be done well. Reading for literary enjoyment, for the style and the wit and the anecdotes, is another thing. For that one may dip into the great stream anywhere, and be carried along by a prose which achieves infinite variety within its major rhythms. But, if the history lives because of the literature, it is still the former which matters most to thoughtful readers, for this tract of human activity is the largest ever viewed in such detail, and put into words, by a single philosophic intelligence; and Gibbon's subject never held more for the student than it does now, when the whole theory of human progress is in question.

A note in my old edition of "The Decline and Fall" shows that I first finished it in January 1913. I have been reading in it at intervals ever since, and I hope to continue doing so in these new volumes, with their pictorial bindings and their six end-paper maps which are themselves a graphic history. Giving it to a young reader today, I would direct his attention to a sentence in the final chapter: "Whatever is fortified will be attacked; and whatever is attacked may be destroyed."

Other recent Heritage Press books worth examining are a new edition of Frank Ernest Hill's excellent modern-English version of the "Canterbury Tales," illustrated by Arthur Szyk ($5); "The Coverly Papers," illustrated by Gordon Ross, with Thackeray's notes ($3.75); "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," illustrated by Edward A. Wilson ($3.75); and Hugo's "Les Miserables," illustrated by Lynd Ward ($5). Szyk's romantic-satirical figures, drawn and colored with precise skill, happily adorn a text that I admired when it first appeared in 1935. The papers from the *Spectator* have been embodied in a fine piece of book-making, a pleasure to hand and eye. The "Mariner" is fortified with the appropriate chapter lifted from Lowes's "The Road to Xanadu"; but the poem remains one of the trickiest, though most tempting, assignments an artist can undertake. The Hugo, with an introduction by Maurois, is a fine, fat package, made for a lap.

"Thomas Jefferson on Democracy" (Penguin, 25 cents), selected and arranged with an introduction by Saul K. Padover, who is now busy telling *PM* readers what to think about Poland's lack of democracy, is one of the richest little books you will ever find. The editor has screened Jefferson's writings, chiefly the letters which were his prime medium of expression, for his opinions regarding society in general and government in particular, and has grouped them skilfully. When you meet Jefferson's phrased ideas in such concentrated form as this, you realize that he was one of the world's great wordmasters. But behind every word was knowledge and hard thought; and, of course, because he was human, sometimes prejudiced irrationality as well. Perhaps his most important single argument was that the world belongs to the living, not to the dead. This is a book to digest.

BEN RAY REDMAN.

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A True Poet

BRADY'S BEND AND OTHER BALLADS. By Martha Keller. New Brunswick, N. J.: The Rutgers University Press. 1946. 142 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by SARA HENDERSON HAY

HERE is poetry that speaks to the heart, to the mind, and, with its spirited melody and beautifully balanced rhythms, to the ear as well. Miss Keller's ballads are as fine as any I have had the good fortune to read. She is a worthy candidate for the ranks of the Benéts, Kipling, Chesterton, and those anonymous masters of the ballad form whose folk songs come from the mountains and plains of rural America. Her ear is faultless; there is a zest and a lilt to her lines which set the foot tapping. Note, for instance, the intricate but seemingly spontaneous rhymes, the metrical skill of these stanzas from the title poem:

This is the story of
The brawny Brady riflemen,
John,
James,
And the celebrated Samuel—
Who fought Bald Eagle with
The Pennsylvania rifle when
Chief Bald Eagle was
The tomahawk of hell.

Old John Brady was
At Valley Forge and Germantown,
Some
say,
At the battle of the Brandywine.
He brought a many of
The tomahawking vermin down,
Before they fixed him with
The Indian sign.

These stanzas are not nearly enough to quote, but the reviewer must content himself with giving samples. Here is another:

I got a man is an Indian fighter
Not afraid of the quick or dead.
A leaf falls light, but his foot falls lighter.
He's a great black woodpecker, born and bred.

The shivering owl and the mouse hawk rest in
Haunts they stole when the birds was flown.
High and deep are the holes they nest in—
But the great black woodpecker builds his own.

I got a man that likes it hilly.
I got a man that hates a town.
I got a man that willy nilly
Must be off once the timber's down.

But Miss Keller does not limit herself to the ballad alone. In her book there are lyrics which are concise, epigrammatic, eloquent with restraint and the force of understatement. There is an unsparing directness and economy in these lines from the poem "Appeasement":

We gave three choices to the Jews—
What wall? What bullet? And what grave?
We took our choice. We did not choose
The same three choices that we gave.

To save our children we betrayed
All conscience and all proper pride.
Yet uselessly. Though we delayed
An hour, perhaps, the hour they died.

I find in Miss Keller's work an integrity, a poetic purpose, and a clarity which delights me in these days when so much obscure and tortuous writing is being done in the name of poetry. It communicates its emotion with a simplicity and a straightforwardness which are never commonplace, in phrases and in imagery strikingly vivid and original. There is about it a magic which makes one remember it. Miss Keller is a true poet, one in whom qualities of intellect and emotion are complemented by a really exceptional technical skill. She has something to say and she knows how to say it, with charm, with vigor, often with an amazing metrical virtuosity, and always with distinction.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
DEAD WEIGHT *Addison Simmons* (Phoenix: $2.)	Radio writers retire, buy small-town drug store, and one scripter is promptly slain. Teammate solves three more homicides.	Idea with possibilities bogged down by cadavers, fantastic day-time serial characters, and thirteen weeksful of palpitating plot.	Everything but sound-effects
DEATH OF A TRAIN *Freeman Wills Crofts* (Dodd, Mead: $2.50)	Leak in high places causes wreck that might have beaten Britain in war. Insp. French defies death to exterminate spy-nest.	Initial plowing through railroad technicalities slightly boring. French's later detecting is sound but affair as whole is rather pedestrian.	Slow-motion
THE LADY FORGOT *Margaret S. Marble* (Harpers: $2.50)	Neurotic Hollywood war-widow, whose mind went blank, acquitted of slaying lover. Psychiatrist helps her to recall fuzzy facts of crime.	Nervous, highly-colored writing capitally conveys state of mind of amnesiac Andrea — but one doesn't care much *who* liquidated Louis!	Candid case history
IT AIN'T HAY *David Dodge* (Simon & Schuster: $2.)	Income tax expert Whitney, kicked around by California racketeer's strong-armers, gets revenge on bearded reefer baron and his murderous mob.	Startling data on marijuana traffic, explosive action throughout, and effective detecting both by lone-wolf Whit and cooperating cops.	Top brackets
LIABILITY LIMITED *John A. Saxon* (Mill: $2.50)	California road-house prop. shot whilst talking to insurance investigator, who, as prime suspect, sleuths self out of difficult situation.	Considerable shooting—mostly at harassed insurance man — some lurid and bibulous ladies, overmuch technical stuff, and tricky solution.	Mildly diverting
A KNIFE IS SILENT *David Kent* (Random: $2.50)	Luscious screen star knifed in Carolina-coast garden of amorous movie magnate. Jason Burr, talented, but not obnoxious, amateur, traps killer.	Bevy of Hollywood cuties, *distingué* and rather mysterious colonel, and two-timing host give plenty of zip to fairly translucent tale.	O.K.
THE AFFAIR OF THE GOLDEN BUZZARD *Clifford Knight* (McKay: $2.)	Murder-mystery simmers for thirty years and then explodes in three more killings in Calif. railroad town. Huntoon Rogers solves it.	Opening chapters set fast, suspenseful pace, but elucidation of quadruple crime, hinging on old train-orders, grinds to somewhat slow finish.	Average
100 TRUE CRIME STORIES *Sam D. Cohen* (World: $1.49)	Factual stuff, mainly of American origin, showing that police sleuths are pretty keen. Introduction by late Lewis J. Valentine.	Bare-bones treatment of most cases, and their understandable sameness, point book more toward researcher than general reader.	Adequate reference book

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Challenge for a New Year

ONE of the outstanding qualities in American boys and girls—and probably in boys and girls everywhere—is their independence of thought and opinion. No longer do they *accept* what is said. They challenge it. It is evident that we can no longer mold the judgment of the older boys and girls. We can only see that they are informed. This fact—and we venture to repeat that it is a fact—seems to point the way to a very large dose, through books, of information. And yet we are still faced with the knowledge that facts alone will not hold the young. As it has always been, the solution is a judicious mixture in books of fact and imagination; facts presented in an authentic and readable text and the creative elements—drama, beauty, humor—presented for the creative quality in them. Not all of the boys and girls are going to be scientists, professional workers, and business men. Some of them are the future poets and novelists and composers.

The truth is that all young people, all over the world, badly need just now what a comparatively small number of them have—free access to a large and carefully selected library. The answers to their innumerable questions do not lie only in the classroom and are not sought only there—as anyone who has served youth in a public library knows. They can best be found in books, although the radio, moving pictures, magazines, and the daily papers play their part.

Certainly the responsibility for book selection in public and school libraries and for the homes of America has never been as great as it is now. Youth needs the wisdom and beauty and humor of the past and the challenge and stimulation of the present. Their need to know the truth before power comes into its hands is not only "cultural." It is objective. As far as we can see, it is imperative.

MARY GOULD DAVIS.

A Plea for Thought

YOUNG PEOPLE'S BOOK OF ATOMIC ENERGY. By Robert D. Potter. New York: Robert M. McBride. 1946. 171 *pp.* $2.50.

PROFESSOR POTTER begins his book with an eye-witness description of the Bikini tests—Test Able and Test Baker. Then he goes on to describe the early research on the release of atomic energy in the United States and in Europe. His chapters on "What Is an Atom?" and "Energy—What Is It?" are amazingly clear and understandable for so complex a problem. He discusses the possibilities of atomic energy as it might be used for peaceful purposes including medicine, and ends his book with an analysis of the proposed Atomic Development Authority of the United Nations. Like most scientists, his conclusion is that the only solution to mass destruction is to outlaw war itself. The tone of his book is calm and dispassionate, but underlying every word is an earnest plea for thought. His work is one that will answer many of the questions that young people are asking about the greatest and most dramatic of world problems.

M. G. D.

Record of the AAF

OUR FIGHTING PLANES: The Story of U. S. Military Aircraft of World War II. Text and Illustrations by Reed Kinert. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1946. 160 *pp.* $3.75.

ONE can have nothing but admiration for this stunning book that tells the full story of the American Air Force and its equipment. It will gladden the heart of all aviation enthusiasts, even the very young ones. There are well over one hundred drawings, some in black-and-white and some in color. They cover all types of planes and will give the lucky owners of this book an absolute means of identifying them. The technical information that accompanies each drawing is reinforced with vivid word pictures of where and when the plane was used. At the foot of each page is a table that gives the type, dimension, weight, engine, performance, and remarks. It is not only a veritable encyclopedia of information. It is, too, a record of achievement of which every American can be proud.

M. G. D.

Story of Television

TELECASTING AND COLOR. By Kingdon S. Tyler. Illustrated with drawings by James MacDonald and with photographs. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1946. 213 *pp.* $2.75.

MR. TYLER, a construction engineer for the Columbia Broadcasting System, is the author of "Modern Radio." In this book he tells for young people—for the first time, as far as this reviewer knows—the full story of the development of television. He delves into the past and into the future, and describes the use of television during the war. Most of his book is taken up with technical equipment—the camera, the transmitter and receiver, the electronic tube, etc. The last chapter is on color television. To a layman, the section on Program Research is particularly interesting because it shows how much the scientific and entertainment world has learned in the last two decades about a listening and a "watching" public.

In Mr. Tyler's opinion future programs will be based on a thorough and scientific knowledge of what the public likes rather than on "fan mail" and a mass reaction. It is his belief

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that television will not crowd out either movies or radio broadcasting. He has written a clear, readable, and challenging book. M. G. D.

The World of Art

MORE PICTURES TO GROW UP WITH. By Katharine Gibson. New York: American Studio Books. 1946. 144 *pp.* $3.50.

THIS second volume of "Pictures to Grow Up With" is even better than the first. There are eight reproductions in full color as well as the black-and-white reproductions on every page. Miss Gibson divides the book into six sections: Animals and Birds, The Artist Tells a Story, Outdoors, Indoors, Boys and Girls, and The Artist Dreams a Dream. There is no attempt to give a sequence in time, but it is the choice of subject and the sequence that make the book so appealing and so informative.

The book is well designed and is printed on smooth, heavy paper. It is a very good investment, not only in art but in knowledge of a world that artists have interpreted.

M. G. D.

Career in Radio

DON MARSHALL, ANNOUNCER. By Edward Ford. With Illustrations by Robbie. Philadelphia: Macrae-Smith. 1946. 235 *pp.* $2.

FOR boys and girls who are interested in radio broadcasting as a career this is an informing story. Don Marshall begins his work in a small local station in Florida the day after he graduates from high school. He has a long and, at times, a discouraging apprenticeship, finding in the great, complicated network of which he eventually becomes a broadcaster, a challenge and some obstacles. Through his experiences it is possible to learn a great deal about radio broadcasting, program making, and directing and television.

M. G. D.

Blueprint for Parents

OFF TO A GOOD START: A Handbook for Modern Parents. By Irma Simonton Black. Illustrated by Lydia Cooley. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1946. 256 *pp.* $2.50.

THIS book not only presents a commonsense analysis of most of the problems met by the parents of young children, it also gives a constant encouragement to those parents who face their job with a worthy seriousness but with, perhaps, too much humility. In addition to a complete and interesting presentation of the child and his habits, his place and growth in the family, his relations with other people, and his intellectual expansion and self-expression, Miss Black has shown how problems relating to phases of his growth can best be met by parents who have a relaxed attitude, who know how to enjoy their children, who treat them with firmness and affection but also with the respect and consideration that is due to all individuals. Here problems are explained and analyzed, and sound, concrete suggestions are given. R. A. H.

4 x 2½ Inches

TOMMY THUMB'S SONG BOOK. By Nurse Lovechild. The First Worcester Edition printed at Worcester, Mass., by Isaiah Thomas in 1788. *New York: R. R. Bowker Co.* 1946. 63 *pp.* $1.

THIS facsimile of the little song book that was first printed in London in 1744 is from the first American edition. It is four by two and one half inches, and is bound in flowered paper. Turning the pages, one is impressed with the extraordinary vitality of nursery songs. The very ones that were so carefully printed and illustrated two hundred years ago are still sung in the nurseries of today. Here is "Lullaby, Baby Bunting," "Patty Cake, Patty Cake, Baker's Man," "London Bells," "Who Killed Cock Robin?" and many others that have been passed on from one generation to another in England and in America.

The book opens with a series of grave and often informing woodcuts of the domestic and wild animals, with the sounds that they make indicated below the picture. It goes on with the nursery rhymes, each one illustrated. M. G. D.

Helicopter Life

THE FLYING HOUSE. By Ruth and Latrobe Carroll. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1946. 127 *pp.* $2.

BOYS and girls who remember the fun they have had with the Carrolls' "School in the Sky" will welcome this story of the Bing family who flew around in a helicopter-house, complete with a neat kennel for the dog.

This is a very gay and amusing story, and the illustrations are even better than those in "School in the Sky." M. G. D.

Little Lamb

LINSEY WOOLSEY. By Tasha Tidor. New York: Oxford University Press. 1946. 41 *pp.* $.75.

THIS tiny book would make a very nice birthday present for a little boy or girl. The illustrations are so well printed that they look like original water-colors. The story tells of a lamb—a rather mischievous little lamb—who gets himself into all kinds of trouble. Linsey Woolsey lives on the farm where Alexander the Gander lives, and Dorcas Porkus. This will please the children. Tom and Silvie Ann are there, too, and it is they who settle the trouble and bring about a happy ending. M. G. D.

—*From "The Flying House."*

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Picture Book

THE LITTLE FIRE ENGINE. By Lois Lenski. New York: Oxford University Press. 1946. 48 *pp.* $1.

THIS is a little picture book printed in black and red. It shows Mr. Fireman Small, his engine, his very composed and dignified dog, and his three helpers. They put out a fire in a small house and gallantly rescue a little girl and her doll from an upper window. Every detail of the engine is described and shown in the drawings. Mr. Fireman Small is very engaging. So is his dog. This will make a very popular picture book. M. G. D.

Tale of Vienna

THREE GOOD FRIENDS: An Old Story Retold and Illustrated by William Wiesner. New York: Harper & Bros. 1946. 32 *pp.* $1.50.

WILLIAM WIESNER is a Viennese artist and textile designer who now lives in New York. He heard this amusing tale of the friendship and quarrel of two neighbors, a butcher and tailor, from his grandfather in Vienna, and he gives it a medieval setting with drawings in color that show fascinating details of place, people, and local events. The story has atmosphere and humor, and the illustrations are great fun. M. G. D.

Wat Tyler's Revolt

SON OF THE LAND. By Ivy Bolton. Illustrated by Lorence F. Bjorklund. New York: Julian Messner. 1946. 211 *pp.* $2.25.

THIS is an exciting adventure story, having its historical background in Wat Tyler's revolt of the peasants.

It is the tale of a boy orphan in the Black Plague who came to resent the lot of the serfs, and made up his mind to escape. After an adventure or two with gypsies and outlaws he arrived in London, only to be caught in Wat Tyler's march against the city, and forced to march with the rebels. Watching the bloodshed and horror of the revolt, he understood at last that true freedom cannot be won either by force or by running away. It was in risking his life to save his old master that he found real peace of mind.

The story lacks subtlety and Roger has almost unbelievable honor, courage, and wisdom for a sixteen-year-old boy; but it is fast-moving and dramatic and the background is convincing. R. A. H.

—From "Mystery Tales for Boys and Girls."

Prose and Poetry

MYSTERY TALES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS. Selected by Elva S. Smith. Decorations by Edwin B. Kolsby. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard. 1946. 397 *pp.* $2.50.

IN THIS generous collection of both prose and poetry Miss Smith has included not only the classical writers like Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, and Sir Walter Scott, but writers who are known for their power to create an atmosphere of the supernatural, like Arthur Machen and William Sharp and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. Anyone who has heard an accomplished storyteller tell Sir Arthur's "My Grandfather, Hendy Watty" knows how its mixture of horror and humor holds an audience spellbound, even if that audience is made up of adults. As a matter of fact, this collection will probably be much read by adults.

Miss Smith divides it into seven parts: Hidden Treasure, Ghost-Ships and Phantom Isles, Magic Spells and Enchantments, Uncanny Tales, Humor and Phantasy, The Supernatural, and With a Background of History. The poems serve to intensify the atmosphere. Like music, they lead into the mood before the story itself is begun. Some of the tales are little known to the average reader—as Selma Lagerlöf's "The Fisherman's Ring" and Arthur Machen's "The Bowman." The most recent story is one from Jan Struther's "A Pocketful of Pebbles." The black-and-white decorations and the jacket in color give the right atmosphere for the book, but one wishes the acknowledgments had been moved to the end. There is a sense of heaviness in the make-up that retards the interest of the stories. M. G. D.

Little Orphans

THE VISITING JIMPSONS. By Irmengarde Eberle. Illustrated by Ruth Kreps. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1946. 188 *pp.* $2.

THE three young Jimpsons had no parents. They had been passed around from relative to relative so many times that they were very much confused. Mel had lost interest in making friends—only to lose them again. Frannie was so shy that it took most of her brief stay in each place to adjust herself. Bobby was still so young that constant change had not completely subdued him. They had a surprisingly happy few months with their elderly Aunt Elva. Then came her failing health and the threat of the worst change of all—separation of the three "stick-together Jimpsons."

How their impulsive, appealing personalities won them a permanent home makes a pleasant, realistic story. R. A. H.

Family Reunited

MISS NAVY, JUNIOR. By Jean Dupont Miller. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1946. 211 *pp.* $2.

THE war was over, her father was on his way home with his ship, and soon the Copeland family would be together again at their old Navy Base at Coronado. Vicky looked back over three happy years spent in a little Iowa town and realized that there were satisfactory ways of life other than being "in the Navy." Still, she had no real regret at pulling up her roots and becoming once more a "Navy junior." It was different with her brother Gus who, slated for Annapolis, wanted more than anything else to be a small-town doctor like his uncle.

But there were disappointments, frustration, and near tragedy to be met in the days that followed. Vicky proved that she could face them and carry a heavy load of responsibility on her young shoulders. The maturing of a fifteen-year-old girl, her growing up in understanding, sympathy, and common sense, her growing power to follow through her generous but often impulsive gestures make a warm-hearted and appealing story. The characterizations are good, there are plenty of absorbing incidents and the background of Navy life with its sacrifice and trials as well as its fun and drama is very well drawn. R. A. H.

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the Phoenix Nest

SURVIVALS

HOW will our hieroglyphics of debate:
The *pros* and *cons*, the *wherefores* scrawled in blood,
Be viewed, O Seeker, when, in coming late,
You find rosetta stones within our mud?
What will you see within the fossil bed
Of lurid laminations of our time:
Archaic lamentations for the dead,
Or all the courage and pity of our climb?

For when you chip away the layered tale,
Far-wanderer on that alluvium
Which these same seas uncover, you may fail
To find our footprints in millennium,
And yet our lifeblood in that granite hill,
Where we had died, bequeath you all your skill.

HAROLD ZLOTNIK.

* * *

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Collectors' Association writes me of its formation and intentions, notable because of the 65th birthday anniversary of F.D.R. on this January 30. Already the association has a hundred members, and they may put me down as one who wishes to join. We believe that with the passage of time the position of Franklin D. Roosevelt, not only as a great President, but as a world figure, will become only more secure. The association believes that the Franklin D. Roosevelt Collectors' Association can be of importance. Its objects are the commemoration of the memory of Roosevelt, the exchange of information, and the publication of pertinent material that might otherwise go unrecorded. A journal of the association, and the printing of a yearly monograph on some phase of F.D.R. and His Times are among its present objectives. It solicits further suggestions. If you are interested, write to the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer, 16 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago 2, Illinois.

* * *

Some moons ago I brought up the subject of that obscure poem "The Whip," by the late Edwin Arlington Robinson. In a forthcoming brochure on Robinson (New Directions) Professor Yvor Winters of Stanford University furnishes an explanation by Don Stanford, a young Western poet. He also notes that he does not understand another poem of Robinson's, a sonnet called "En Passant." Neither do I. *The Explicator* might take it up. But thus my remarks on "The Whip":

"We are given a man and wife and the wife's lover," says—of "The Whip"—Mr. Stanford, through Professor Winters. "The husband has long suspected his wife's fidelity but had fought the suspicion." So far so good. But "the three are in some fashion tipped out from a boat in a river, perhaps from the same boat, perhaps, as the fifth line of the fourth stanza suggests, from two boats, or at any rate with the husband in some way in pursuit of the two others." Here I must charge lazy thinking, "in some way," to Mr. Stanford, through Professor Winters. And where he turns up those "boats" is more than I can fathom! The wife does turn and strike her husband, but it is with a whip, and you don't usually carry a riding-crop with you in a rowboat or even in a sailboat. If it is to be said that the whip is merely a symbol, all I can reply is that the whole poem is intensely realistic. The only symbols in it are the ropes of sand and of water, and the significance of those is easy to understand. But aside from the poem being called "The Whip," "the chase" alluded to in the line Mr. Stanford mentions is obviously on horseback: *vide* lines five and six of the fifth and last verse:

And she—she struck the blow,
You but a neck behind . . .
You saw the river flow—

In a pursuing rowboat one would hardly be "a neck behind," though one might be a length behind. If a length behind, it would be somewhat difficult to strike a person with a whip from the rowboat (or sailboat) ahead. The phrase "a neck behind," solely of the turf, is literal. If it were not it would be a phrase much more clumsy than any Robinson ever used. As it is, it conjures up a vivid picture. "You saw the river flow." If you were in the river in a rowboat, sailboat, or just splashing about in it, you would not notice its flow as you would from the bank or shore. Obviously, in his pursuit of the lovers, the husband saw the river suddenly ahead of them, too late for them to avoid; and, as his wife saw it too, she turned in the saddle and struck him with her riding-whip:

But what's this on your face,
Blue, curious, like a welt?
(Lines seven and eight, verse four.)

If we had made the chase, and had felt then as the husband felt when his wife, in terror and fury, struck him, before she and her lover plunged into the river, Robinson wonders what we would have done. What the husband did was to leave

. . . the two to find
Their own way to the brink
Then—shall I call you blind?—
You chose to plunge and sink.

So I'm afraid those boats won't do at all!

* * *

Those still perilously attracted by the "shortest poem" number include Richard Armour of Scripps College, Claremont, California, whose best effort is, in my opinion:

QUESTION AND ANSWER

?
!

Also Rose Glazier of Hollywood, California, and lower-case marty marty of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with a translation of Caesar's last words to his assassin, Brutus:

U
2?

And Martha Baird, of *Aesthetic Analysis* (including *Aesthetic Child Care*), edited at 67 Jane Street, New York City 14, by Eli Siegel, the renowned author of "Hot Afternoons Have Been in Montana," tells me that the man who as an undergraduate wrote the poem in a class held by George M. Sneath, now of Boston University—which started this whole series—was no less a poet than Mr. Siegel himself.

* * *

PLANTATION ON THE JAMES

The Fiend's own racket rouses all Poplar Hill
As horses and mules and cows dash up the lane.
The University bloods are at it again,
And Thomas and Miles are laughing fit to kill!
With tails that flourish a tin-pan codicil
The livestock clatter and flee their urgent bane
Young Edgar Allan, cloaked like a don of Spain,
Devilish handsome, herding with right good will. . . .

And then in the octagon room with the alcove niche
And bust of Pallas, and high four-poster bed,
Where summer moonlight over the floor is shed
On dark bent head, what cavernous glooms enrich
The night—what haunted palace, what fountained shrine,
What murmur, "The viol, the violet, and the vine!"

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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FIGHTING MEN

(Continued from page 8)

serve as a guide. The chairman could not take more than twenty minutes for his talk. The remainder of the period was devoted to discussion between the men and the chairman, the men being free to debate with him without regard to the officer-enlisted-man relationship, so that the discussion itself became a democratic experiment while also serving the purpose for which it was intended. Ranging over wide areas British groups talked about the Beveridge plan, war production, the reconstruction of Europe, Indian women in the war, the battle for oil, and Japanese psychology.

Yet, however close we approached to the apparently better model of British orientation and however skilfully devised our own program, its successful application depended largely upon the interest taken in it by camp commanders in the field. Each camp had stamped upon it the personality and character (or lack of them) of its commanding officer, and since, in the nature of things, some of these men were first-rate while others were nonentities, the atmosphere of camps varied widely. So, too, the attitude which the commanding officer took toward orientation was the determining factor in its success. If he was inclined to look upon it as academic eyewash in the manner that many of us have often regarded research in pure science, the program was doomed to failure by the stupidity of the "practical" man. But if he understood its importance and knew what the War Department was trying to do, it was marked for success. What happened when the camp commander was scornful of orientation was described by Sergeant Joseph E. Ray in *The New York Times.*

He said that lecture assignments often fell to second lieutenants who were generally characterized "by an abysmal ignorance of the subject, together with a cynical indifference to the whole matter, the result being that a lecture period becomes a joke and rear or sleeping seats quickly go at a premium." Since men fight or study best when led by a competent officer or teacher, it follows that such a procedure discredited orientation and made it futile in the eyes of soldiers. I fear there was too much of this and that eventually we shall pay heavily for our failure in this all-important field.

The above will constitute a chapter in "This Is the Story," to be published late this month by Houghton Mifflin.

PERSONALS

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(Continued on page 34)

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PERSONALS

(Continued from page 33)

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